A SPEAKER'S COMMENTARIES

BY

THE RIGHT HON.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, 1905–1921

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

CHAPTER XVII

1905

A Wolf in Cumberland—Jubilee of A.D.C.—Grillions'—Chosen Speaker—Visit of French Fleet.

On the 1st of January 1905 there appeared a paragraph in the Press which purported to announce that the Government proposed to send me to South Africa as High Commissioner in succession to Lord Milner, whose period of appointment was expected to terminate in April. The Press announcement was the only information which I ever received on the matter, and as a matter of fact Lord Milner remained in South Africa for a considerable time longer.

Great excitement was caused early in January in my constituency and in the neighbouring county of Northumberland, by the appearance of a wolf, which caused some damage to the flocks of farmers and frightened a good many lonely residents in the fell-side districts. Pursuit was organized, everybody who had a gun or rifle joined a hunting party at the imminent risk of being mistaken for the wolf and being peppered by a neighbour; the wolf was frequently seen, but always escaped. Eventually his corpse was found on the main line of the Midland Railway, not far from Armathwaite-on-Eden, having been run over at night. The supposition was that the wolf had escaped from a travelling menagerie in or near Newcastle, but of course the proprietors of the menagerie were careful to avoid making any statement as to

their loss for fear of being held liable for the sheep and cattle devoured by their stray exhibit.

A sequel to the story of the wolf, which I have heard, is that the body was stuffed and exhibited in a taxidermist's shop in Newcastle, where it was recognized by an American Arctic explorer as one of his Eskimo dog team. At all events, my artist friend, Mr. C. M. Newton, who was staying with us at the time of the wolf scare for the purpose of painting the portrait of a neighbour, Mr. Toppin, sent me two amusing drawings of himself pursued by the wolf and of the American recognizing his old dog Toby.

Parliament opened on the 14th of February. The Address lasted a fortnight. Speaker Gully's health left a good deal to be desired, and in a week's time I was requisitioned to take his place. In the first four months of the session I sat on eight or nine days for him, as he was incapacitated by illness from enduring the physical strain of the long sittings.

On the 25th of February I was at Cambridge, having been invited to preside at the dinner given to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the A.D.C. I had been present at the twenty-fifth anniversary, when the King, then Prince of Wales, had been in the chair, and I felt highly honoured at being invited on this occasion to occupy so distinguished a position. My old friend, Mr. J. W. Clark, was my host, and he had collected for the occasion a number of old A.D.C. men, including Lord Desart, Mr. F. Cavendish Bentinck, Mr. G. W. Elliott, and the founder of the Club himself, Mr. F. C. Burnand, then editor of *Punch*. The dinner was held in the Guildhall. We mustered about 120 past and present members of the A.D.C. Mr. Burnand, Mr. Alfred Lyttelton, Mr.

Walter Durnford, Sir R. C. Jebb, Mr. J. W. Clark, Lord Willoughby d'Eresby, and Mr. Chalmers, the President of the Club, made speeches suitable to the occasion, and after the oratory we repaired to the Club rooms, where the Undergraduates gave a performance of the screen scene from the "School for Scandal," and to complete the entertainment Mr. Schofield spoke an epilogue, written for the occasion by Sir R. C. Jebb, formerly Professor of Greek and at that time M.P. for the University.

On the day of my return from Cambridge, I dined for the first time at Grillions', having been elected to the Club the previous week. Grillions is a dining Club which meets once a week during the session and is composed of some of the best-known representatives of politics, the Army, the Law, the Church, literature and science. It is limited to eighty members, the number of members usually dining there being about twelve or fifteen. Party differences are not permitted to interfere with the election of a candidate or with the social intercourse which takes place. Selection is jealously guarded by the necessity of obtaining a majority of votes of all the members, and even after selection the election of a candidate is submitted to a further test of the ballot. The Club was originally founded by Sir Thomas Acland in 1813, and there is generally at least one member of the Acland family a member. There is no entrance fee, but in lieu thereof every member is supposed to have his portrait drawn by an artist of distinction and to circulate a reproduction to all the members of the Club. These reproductions are framed and hung round the walls of the room in which the Club now dines at the Cecil Hotel. Some of these portraits are quite excellent,

more especially those by Graves and the elder Richmond, done in the 'sixties and 'seventies. The more recent ones are certainly not up to the level of the older. As an example of the catholic character of our dinners, or rather of our diners, here is a list of those whom I found present, and they are typical of subsequent occasions. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Mr. A. J. Balfour, Sir M. Hicks Beach, Sir R. Walpole, Mr. G. Balfour, Sir Alfred Lyall, Sir Edward Grey, Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff, Mr. Evelyn Ashley, Lord Stanley, Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, Sir Robert Herbert, and the Attorney-General.

The political situation had intensified, and the unsatisfactory position which the Government had occupied in the previous session had become worse rather than better. Although it was in fact impossible to ignore the Fiscal issue as the dominant factor in the situation, the Prime Minister sought to do so, and endeavoured to persuade his supporters that it was merely an academic question which had no bearing on practical politics. The Opposition naturally seized every available opportunity of raising it and, as they were fortunate in the ballot, brought forward a series of resolutions on a succession of Wednesday evenings before Easter, each raising the Fiscal question in a different form. On the first occasion Mr. Churchill was in charge of the motion, but Mr. Balfour countered it by moving the previous question, on the grounds already stated, and secured a majority of 43. A few days later Mr. Ainsworth moved a resolution condemning the so-called scientific tariff and Mr. Balfour replied by pointing to the previous decision of the House and advising his followers to abstain from any discussion or division upon the motion, which he characterized as

a "trap." Two stalwarts, however, remained and went into the No lobby, but 250 Members supported Mr. Ainsworth. The following day there was another motion of a similar kind, dealing with the question from the point of view of the shipping interest, and this was carried unanimously in the absence of the Government supporters. A fourth attack was made a week later and with similar results. All these proceedings told heavily against the Government and disconcerted its followers. It was said that the Government was afraid of discussion in the House, was afraid of by-elections, was afraid of Mr. Chamberlain, and was afraid of the results of a General Election.

The introduction of Chinese coolies to work in the Transvaal gold-mines had also become a burning question and was being worked in the constituencies for all and more than all it was worth. These matters, together with the Budget resolutions and votes in Supply, occupied the House until Easter.

I went at Easter for a short visit to Berlin, which I had not seen for forty years, and which I found very much altered. The circular railway had disappeared and the sites of the house in which my parents had lived and of the school which I had attended were built over with large modern houses in flats; the British Embassy had been moved, the Sieges Allée was new to me, and the town generally had grown considerably; but I was able to recognize without difficulty the main streets and buildings with which I had in my youth been familiar. My wife and second son, Arthur, who had spent the winter on the Dalmatian coast, joined me in Berlin, where my eldest son was also in residence for the purpose of learning German.

We returned in time for the meeting of the House

on the 2nd of May, when I had again to sit for the Speaker, who was ill. A couple of weeks later, when I was again sitting for the Speaker, I was confronted with an awkward situation. Leave had been obtained to move the adjournment of the House in order to discuss the question of the proposed Colonial Conference. After speeches from the mover and seconder, Mr. Alfred Lyttelton, who was then Colonial Minister, rose on behalf of the Government to make a reply, but the Opposition were determined not to hear him. Mr. Lyttelton never got beyond the first few words of his first sentence. Every time he began he was howled down. The Opposition, I presume, were under the impression that Mr. Balfour, who was present all the time, intended to devolve upon his colleague the duty of reply and did not propose himself to take part in the discussion; but in reality it was not so. Mr. Balfour had always intended to speak, but he was reserving himself for the duty of replying upon the whole debate. However that may have been, from 9.30 to 10.30 the House remained in an uproar. I tried my best to smooth matters out, appealed both privately and publicly to Sir H. Campbell Bannerman, who was leading the Opposition, and to Mr. Herbert Gladstone, the chief Opposition Whip, and at last, seeing that it was hopeless to attempt to obtain a hearing for the Colonial Secretary, I had recourse to Standing Order 21, which permitted the adjournment of the House in the case of grave disturbance, and declaring the sitting at an end, left the Chair. It was a most regrettable scene, and one which, I felt sure, would not be forgotten and might at a later time lead to similar occurrences when the position of parties might be reversed. I had many searchings at heart,

thinking that possibly by some means I could have prevented or mitigated the disaster, for such I considered it; but I could not honestly come to the conclusion that I had been in any way to blame.

Just before Whitsuntide I received a letter from the Speaker, informing me of his contemplated retirement and the probability of my being selected as his successor, and on the 6th of June he announced his resignation to the House. It was not unexpected, for his health had been failing for some months and the strain and burden of responsibility had very obviously told severely upon him.

On the 7th of June the House passed a vote of thanks to him for his conduct in the Chair, and on the following day I was elected his successor, with the usual formalities attending the election to the Speakership.

Sir Alexander Acland Hood had seen me a few days before, and on behalf of the Prime Minister had enquired if I would undertake the post, to which enquiry I gave a ready assent. I will not pretend that the invitation was unexpected. For some little time, especially since I had frequently occupied the Speaker's Chair, the possibility of Mr. Speaker Gully's retirement had been present to my mind, and I had formed the conclusion, the justice of which Time alone could ratify or condemn, that I had sufficient aptitude and experience for the task. I was not aware of any other candidate who had better qualifications than myself; I was of a suitable age, viz. fifty, had been in the House of Commons for twenty-two years, had acted as Chairman of Ways and Means for ten years, was in sound health, except for occasional attacks of gout, and had not, so far as I was aware, antagonized any section or

party. What would have happened if the Conservative party had not been in office is a speculation which is difficult to resolve. Possibly I might have lost my seat in the *débâcle* which occurred at the General Election a few months later, and with the loss of my seat all chances of obtaining the Speakership would have vanished; for I should not have been present at the first meeting of the new House. Whilst I was aware of my qualifications, I was quite alive to my deficiencies. I was not a finished or accomplished speaker, I had only a limited vocabulary, and was not quick at putting into suitable words the opinion which I desired to express. However, I had acquired, during my ten years' apprenticeship, two invaluable assets, viz. patience and caution; and being of a somewhat phlegmatic disposition, I was prepared to endure what had to be endured without impatience or irritability.

My proposer was Sir Michael Hicks Beach, to my respect for whom I have already referred, and my seconder was Sir W. Hart Dyke, an old friend who had given me my first chance of advancement when in 1887 he appointed me Fourth (Unpaid) Charity Commissioner. After my election in due form the Prime Minister and the leader of the Opposition offered their congratulations, and they were joined by Mr. John Redmond, who, whilst adding his congratulations to theirs, warned me that one of the essential qualifications for my office was courage. That warning I took to heart.

I am glad to remember that my dear old father and mother were both in the galleries of the House on the occasion of my election, and my second son Arthur was given leave for the day from Eton to attend the function. My daughter unfortunately happened

at this time to be suffering from an attack of scarlet fever and was in quarantine in our house, 16 Wilton Crescent, where my wife was looking after her whilst I had transferred myself temporarily to my parents' house at Lowther Lodge.

Before the House met again, after the Whitsuntide recess, my wife and I spent a few days with Mr. A. Wingfield at Ampthill, where I had spent all my early life. Many old friends were still living there who were kind enough to offer me their congratulations on my appointment. The house in which my grandparents had lived, with which as a boy I had been so familiar, was now occupied by Emily Lady Ampthill, the widow of Lord Odo Russell, who had been created Lord Ampthill on his retirement from the Embassy at Berlin. Except for the pulling down of the stables few changes had been made in the house or grounds. The beautiful old oaks in the park showed, however, considerable decay since the days when I had sketched most of them and knew their outlines and characteristics very intimately. I also went over to Woburn Park, bicycling there with Major Murray, and saw some of the Duke of Bedford's collection of giraffes, wilde-beest, and other strange animals, in the spacious enclosures allotted to them.

On the 20th of June I went through the formalities attaching to the presentation of the Speaker in the House of Lords for the King's approval. This involved the recital of two or three formal sentences of some length, which required to be learnt by heart in order that their delivery might produce a proper effect. Being in old-fashioned phraseology and the exact words which have been used for at least 250 years, they were not very easy to remember. However,

all went off well and on my return to the House I commenced work.

During the rest of this session and before I was able to enter into possession of the Speaker's house and library, a small room in the lobby at the back of the Speaker's Chair was allotted to me for my use during the sittings of the House, but I still resided in my house in Wilton Crescent.

A day or two after I had entered upon my new duties King Edward desired me to go to Windsor to see him. Accordingly on the 24th of June, a Saturday, I went down by train and expected to find somebody attached to the Court, or at all events a footman, to inform me of the arrangements made and of my share in them. Not finding anybody, I started to walk up to the Castle, when the coachman of a Royal brougham with the shutters up hied me with his whip and asked if I was the Speaker. I admitted it; he said, "Jump in then"; and so I drove up to the Castle with the shutters of the windows up, much to the surprise on our arrival at the door of the attendants in waiting. I had an interview with King Edward in the same room, I think, in which I had been sworn in a Privy Councillor before Queen Victoria. He enquired after my duties, my views of the situation, my family and relations, my son at Eton, and so forth. In subsequent years I had many opportunities of meeting His Majesty, whose bright smile, good nature and *bonhomie* never failed to leave themselves impressed on my mind as his most distinguishing characteristics. After my interview I went down to Eton, where my son Arthur was at school, and found the Eton and Winchester match going on, so there was a big crowd on the cricket ground.

The Government programme which had still to be got through before the prorogation, did not contain any seriously contentious topics. An Aliens' Bill, a Shipowners' Liability Bill, a Public Trustee Bill, a Sparks from Engines Bill, a Scotch Education Bill and a Scotch Churches Bill, did not contain any very highly inflammable material, but the general political temperature was feverish, there seemed to be a veiled but very bitter animosity against the Prime Minister and the condition of the House was what is now called "nervy." It seemed that an outburst might arise at any moment. In this state of things I was suddenly called upon to take a very grave decision. Mr. Balfour had for some time contemplated a Redistribution Bill being passed into law before facing the next General Election. He elected to proceed by resolution and tabled one long resolution setting out the chief principles on which he proposed to found his Redistribution Bill. In the ordinary procedure of the House such a resolution would admit of one amendment being moved to it, viz. to leave out all the words after the first word or two, for the purpose of substituting others. If this procedure had been held to be applicable, it would have resulted in a debate of some two or three days on the general question, and a decision upon the amendment would, if it were negatived by the Government forces, have determined all the rest of the resolution, to which no further amendments could have been moved. The objectors naturally raised the question of the form in which the resolution would be put, and after taking a day or two to look up precedents and consult with the clerks at the table, I came to the conclusion that the only fair way to proceed was to break up the resolution in such manner

as to give the House an opportunity of considering and deciding upon each separate principle. It was obvious that, if this course were followed, it would become impossible to proceed with either the resolution or the legislation to be founded upon it. Thus I early found myself in somewhat of a difficulty, for I knew that a decision on these lines would have the effect of wrecking the Balfour resolution and of the Redistribution scheme. However, having satisfied myself of the justice of my opinion, I announced it, and there was an end of the policy.

A day or two later the Government Whips were caught napping, and on a division in committee on a resolution moved by the Irish party on the salary of the Irish Land Commission officials, the Government was beaten by a majority of three. It was said, I know not with what truth, that several of the Opposition had been carefully secreted in an out-of-the-way room, and that the Government Whips had been misled into thinking they had a majority, but that when the division bells rang these gentlemen had been released and raised the Opposition numbers to a point sufficiently high to obtain the majority. At the defeat of the Government there was a great scene of enthusiasm, and it was fully expected in many quarters that this defeat would mean the end of Mr. Balfour's administration. However, after taking the week-end to think the matter over, Mr. Balfour decided to remain. There was considerable indignation, or assumed indignation, over this, and we spent a long afternoon discussing the position, but with no further division; and from that time until the end of the session routine work and the completion of as much of the Government programme as could be carried, occupied the time of the House.

The House rose on the 11th of August, and on the following day I had to take part in my first public function. This was a reception of the officers of the French Fleet, which had, for the first time for many years, come into Portsmouth. Lord Halsbury, in gold robes and wig and gown, and myself, in black velvet Court suit, received the two Admirals, Caillard and Puech, and all the officers, in the Royal Gallery. Half-way through the ceremony it suddenly dawned upon some of us what an inappropriate spot this was to have selected, for the two chief features of the large hall are the huge pictures of the Death of Nelson at Trafalgar and the Meeting of Wellington and Blücher on the field of Waterloo. Nothing, however, happened which called for any explanation or apology, and after the reception we formed a procession and marched down to Westminster Hall, where the French officers were entertained at a luncheon. Speeches from Lord Halsbury, Mr. Balfour, Mr. John Morley, the two Admirals and myself followed. The hall is too vast to enable an audience to hear, but we had to make the best of it. I remember asking Mr. Morley if he proposed to speak in French. "No," he said, "I heard the French admiral speak yesterday in English, and I take warning."

Admiral Puech, who sat next to me, was very nervous, and I noticed that the only refreshment of which he partook was an ice and a glass of claret. He explained that he had dined the day before with the Lord Mayor at Guildhall and was not feeling very well. I am afraid that his Westminster Hall luncheon was not calculated to bring about a rapid recovery. After luncheon we went to the terrace for cigarettes and coffee and the inevitable photograph.

In conversation with Mr. Morley that afternoon, when we were discussing the position of the old House of Commons in relation to the present, he told me that he had once enquired of Mr. Gladstone where the House had sat after the fire in 1834, and before it took possession of its present chamber in 1844, and that Mr. Gladstone had completely forgotten—a curious lapse of memory. The answer, I believe, is that a temporary building was erected on or about the spot where the statue of Richard Cœur de Lion now stands, close to the entrance to St. Stephen's Hall.

After the French Fleet function I went down to Cumberland and began my holiday at Hutton John.

I ought here to note that I took over from my predecessor, as my private secretary, his son Mr. Edward Gully. It would not be easy to find a man better qualified for the position. Always cheerful, obliging, full of the lobby gossip, a general favourite with Members of all parties, thoroughly *au fait* of the duties and etiquette attaching to the position of the Speakership, he was of invaluable assistance to me in the early days of my Speakership.

I soon discovered that in addition to the work of the House many other duties were laid upon me. By virtue of the Speaker's office I was one of the three principal trustees of the British Museum, both at Bloomsbury and at South Kensington. I was expected to attend the fortnightly meetings of the Standing Committee of this body and in the absence of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lord Chancellor (the latter of whom seldom attended) to take the chair.

I was also, by Statute, the Chairman of the Caledonian and Crinan Canal Commission. This involved a good

deal of correspondence with our engineer on matters arising out of the administration of the canal as well as occasional meetings of the Commissioners in London. The general supervision of the library in the House of Commons was specially in my department, and on important matters connected with the organization and administration of the clerical staff of the House I was always consulted by the chief clerk, Sir C. P. Ilbert. Whenever I had an afternoon out of the Chair, that is to say when the House went into Committee, Members used to bring me their complaints or seek for information, so I was always kept busy. I remember well one Member, who seldom missed a day without coming to see me about some trivial matter or other. As an old Member of the House he considered himself specially charged with the general direction of the manners and customs of the House, and I found him a terrible bore, especially as I felt no particular friendship for him, he having put on the paper a motion for a vote of censure on myself when I was Chairman of Ways and Means, a motion which he never attempted to bring on, although he kept it on the notice paper for a whole session.

Another Member who took up a great deal of my time was my friend Mr. J. G. Swift MacNeill. He seemed to have the gift of discovering great Constitutional points in ordinary occurrences, and in his zeal for the Constitution and his dread lest in any particular it should be infringed, constituted himself its guardian and would give me notice that he was about to raise some abstruse and recondite point at question time. As these letters generally reached me about 1.30 p.m. and were in an almost illegible handwriting, it took me all my time to decipher them, look up the authorities and prepare

myself to reply to him by 2.40 p.m., when proceedings began. For some time I was able to persuade him to use a typewriter, and this facilitated my task, but before he left the House he had reverted to the use of his pen and his calligraphy had not improved in the interval. I have referred to him as "my friend" for, notwithstanding the difficulties in which he often placed me, we were always on most amicable terms, both publicly and privately, and when he eventually left the House of Commons I felt that the House was the poorer by the loss of our erudite and earnest lover of the Constitution.

I was not sorry when the recess came and I could for a few months put aside all official anxieties. It is one of the great advantages of the Speakership that although during the session the hours are long and there are many anxious moments, the recess gives complete relief and affords an opportunity for travel, sport, exercise or study to the heart's content. My anxieties were also much relieved by the generous behaviour of my opponent, Mr. Tweddle, in Mid-Cumberland, who at once announced the withdrawal of his candidature against me. This was all the more generous as the Conservative party in the neighbouring constituency of Carlisle had set a bad example by contesting Mr. Gully's seat in 1895, soon after he had been elected Speaker. I took an early opportunity of calling upon Mr. Tweddle, who then resided at Alston in Cumberland, to thank him for his action. It is probable that in any event I should have been re-elected, as I had given great attention to the constituency during the preceding five years, but the absence of any anxiety on that score was undoubtedly a great advantage.

At Hutton John we received during the autumn the visit of a few friends, including the Poet Laureate, Sir John Gorst, my cousin Mr. F. Cavendish Bentinck and his wife, Sir Edward Ridley, who was Assize Judge at Carlisle, with his marshal Mr. Walter Bromley Davenport, and Canon Rawnsley.

With the last named we became eventually very intimate acquaintances. He was the incumbent of Crosthwaite (one of the two parishes composing the little town of Keswick), an honorary Canon and eventually one of the Canons of Carlisle, Chairman of the Highways Committee of the Cumberland County Council, and an active promoter of every sort of local activity in the county. His zeal sometimes outran his discretion and led him into controversies which had better have been avoided by a man of his cloth, but he did a great work for Keswick and for his fellow-citizens in general, in maintaining their rights of access to the beauties of the lake scenery and in obtaining through the National Trust (of which he was one of the founders) possession of many interesting and lovely spots, to be preserved for all time for the benefit of the British public. The county societies such as the Archæological, Musical and Horticultural, could always rely on him for a carefully prepared and thoughtful speech or paper. He liked public speaking, and would never decline an opportunity of making his voice heard. He had a curious habit of shutting his eyes whilst speaking, as though he were seeking to forget his audience and concentrate on the text of his speech, and he seldom spoke without introducing a few lines of rhyme, composed by himself for the occasion. In the matter of rhyming verses he was prolific. Ballads, odes, sonnets, especially the latter, came from his pen in

an abundant stream. I am not in a position to appraise his more serious work, but his lighter work was often amusing and his versification ingenious. It was said, and I think not unfairly, that his poetry was prosaic and his prose poetical. He took a great deal of trouble over his sermons, and during the summer season at Keswick his church was always packed. There was an amusing incident which I remember occurring in the autumn of 1895. Mr. George Russell, who was staying in the neighbourhood with Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Flower, came to church at Crosthwaite on a Sunday when Canon Rawnsley gave out for the congregation to sing, a hymn of his own composition. This hymn was something of a pæan of victory, rejoicing over the recent defeat of the Rosebery Government, or, at all events, it might have been interpreted in that sense. In the middle of the hymn George Russell stamped out of church, making it evident that his exit was a protest and not due to indisposition. A day or two later appeared a vigorous protest from him in *The Times* against "politics in the pulpit," "party proceedings in church," and so on, with a cutting reference to the Reverend Canon's grammar, who had used in one line of his hymn "should" for "shouldst." The amusing part of this incident to me was that my political friends and I had always looked upon the Canon as an opponent or at best a "doubtful."

Canon Rawnsley and his wife, a notable water-colour artist, had founded a school at Keswick for the production of artistic work in brass, in wood and in other materials. Mrs. Rawnsley and a neighbour, Mr. Oddie, drew the designs and superintended their production. The work was exhibited in convenient quarters which came to be known as the Keswick

School of Art, near the old bridge over the Greta (the same spot where my picture had been blown into the river), and found ready purchasers in the summer visitors to the lakes. I do not know with whom the idea originated, but in November of this year my wife and I were presented with a handsome silver rose-bowl, raised on three legs represented by olive tree stems, and surrounded with a suitable inscription. The rose-bowl was chosen because it is largely identified with the heraldic bearings of the ancient city and county of Carlisle, the olive trees were emblematic of peace, which it is supposed to be within the power of a Speaker to bestow, the rose, shamrock and thistle formed the stops between the words of the inscription, and round the base were the initials of the subscribers to this handsome and valuable gift. This work was executed by the Keswick School of Art and presented to us at Canon Rawnsley's house at Crosthwaite by my old friend, Mr. Henry Howard, of Greystoke, with a letter from the donors expressing their satisfaction with my appointment as Speaker and their pride as Cumbrians that Cumberland should have been twice honoured by having been called upon to supply a Speaker to the Chair. The gift came to us as a great and very pleasant surprise.

The little poet, Mr. Alfred Austin, who was with us for a few days, was, as all the world knows, very fond of gardening. In a moment of generosity my wife, who had been going round our garden with him, offered him cuttings of anything which he fancied. He was duly grateful, but did not at the moment indicate the object of his choice. After his departure one of the borders looked as if it had been devastated by some noxious insect, but on enquiry from our gardener, it

appeared that the poet had selected a particular viola for exportation, and had asked the gardener for 200 cuttings, which he had carried off.

We paid what was now becoming our annual visit to Wynyard, where we found Lord and Lady Castlereagh, Lord and Lady Stavordale, Sir William and Miss Anson, the Bishop of Southwark, Mrs. and Miss Talbot, Mr. Perkins, the organist at Birmingham, who played for us delightfully on the chapel organ, Mr. St. John and Lady Hilda Brodrick, Sir F. Mowatt (Permanent Secretary to the Treasury), Mr. Jeffreys, who had succeeded me as Chairman of Ways and Means, the Dowager Lady Shrewsbury (Lady Londonderry's mother), and Mr. Yeoman, a sporting Yorkshireman, who caused much amusement by pretending to mistake Mr. Perkins (the organist) for Lady Londonderry's private bookmaker.

Later in the autumn we were at Raby Castle, that splendid old pile which retains its feudal characteristics to this day. The occasion of our visit was to meet H.R.H. Princess Beatrice and H.R.H. Princess Ena, who subsequently became Queen of Spain. The other guests were Prince and Princess Lichtenstein (he was Austrian military attaché in London and she a very charming and attractive lady), Lord and Lady and Miss Brougham, Lord Ronaldshay, Mr. Monckton Arundel, Mr. and Lady Anne Fane, Lord and Lady William Cecil (he was in attendance on Princess Beatrice), Lord and Lady Exeter, and Sir Victor Williamson. A big function at Darlington was the occasion for the Princess's visit, but it was also utilized for the inspection of a large coking apparatus at Randolph Colliery, for a visit to the picturesque Barnard Castle and the gigantic Bowes Museum which dominates the little



town. There were also visits to the falls of the Tees at High Force and to the historical house of Rokeby, then tenanted by the Bell Irvings. Velasquez's Venus used to hang there, but was there no longer, having been transferred to the National Gallery. A ball in the large hall at Raby brought the entertainment to a close.

Our hosts, Lord and Lady Barnard, were old friends of my wife and myself. I had known him since we were at Eton together. He had been a clerk in the office of the Charity Commission when I was there in 1887, and had been a hard worker all his life. When he succeeded to the Barnard peerage and somewhat unexpectedly to a considerable share of the fortune of the last Duke of Cleveland, he met with a series of misfortunes; a fall from his horse brought on a serious attack of pneumonia, and this was followed by a succession of minor troubles which must have greatly marred the enjoyment of his magnificent heritage; not least amongst them being the ill-health of his wife, Lady Barnard, who was a daughter of Lord Exeter. She was a tall, handsome lady of very distinguished appearance, when I first knew her; she suffered from a long illness to which she eventually succumbed. Lord Barnard was a descendant of the Sir Harry Vane whom Oliver Cromwell had apostrophized in the well-known words, "Sir Harry Vane? Sir Harry Vane? The Lord deliver me from Sir Harry Vane!" and who was very unjustly executed at the time of the Restoration.

In October I was present on the occasion of the bestowal of the Freedom of the City upon my predecessor Lord Selby. After the function at Guildhall, there was a big luncheon given by the Lord Mayor at the Mansion House, which was also attended by Lord

Peel, the former Speaker. My predecessors during the course of their speeches had prophesied that the times of storm and stress through which they had passed would clear away and that I should find myself in a calmer atmosphere, a prophecy upon which I begged to be allowed to express some doubt.

My wife and I were occupied during the autumn in making arrangements for going into residence at the Speaker's house, and this necessitated a good deal of papering and cleaning, but not much structural repair. Mr. Schomberg McDonell, who was then Permanent Secretary at the Office of Works, was extremely helpful with his advice and superintendence. The chief alteration made was the abolition of the huge kitchen fireplace, which must have consumed tons and tons of coal, and the substitution of a very complete gas range, which economized coal and reduced the temperature of the kitchen.

On the 14th of November we were bidden to a banquet at Windsor, given by the King and Queen to King George of Greece. A special train to Windsor and back made the journey very easy. There was a dinner of some 150 guests with a magnificent display of gold plate and of orchids, and after dinner we had the honour of some conversation with the Queen and with her royal guests.

CHAPTER XVIII

The Speaker—His Duties and Position—Interpretation of Rules—Maintenance of Order—Procedure—Reporters' Gallery—The Deputy Speaker—Resignation of Members.

Having now reached a point in the record of my life at which I entered upon a fresh chapter, it may not be out of place if I briefly indicate what the main duties and responsibilities of the Speakership were, which I was called upon to undertake and discharge.

Those who are acquainted with Parliamentary life will not need to be so informed and will probably be well advised to skip this chapter, but those of my readers who have not sat in Parliament, or are not habitués of the House, may desire some information on the work, which the office of Speaker entails upon its holder.

The interpretation of the rules governing the procedure and the maintenance of order, are the two chief matters which devolve on the Speaker. Now the rules of procedure are contained in a series of Standing Orders (the earliest of which, still in force, dates from 1713), which pass on from one Parliament to another, but are liable at any time to be amended or repealed. They are published in a small volume, and have been so published since 1810. There are also certain Sessional Orders which, as their name implies, only hold good for a session. These latter orders are proposed to and adopted by the House at the commencement of every session, and generally constitute the first resolutions to which the House is asked to assent. But in addition to these Orders, the procedure of the House is guided by ancient usage, and this can only be

discovered by a search amongst the journals of the House, the published records of which go back to the time of Edward VI. From time to time an index of the journals is prepared, and it is by consulting that index and referring to the relevant entries in the journals, that it is possible to discover what the decision of the House has been upon any particular point arising. It is obvious that this cannot be the work of a moment, but requires time for research. No man can be acquainted with all the precedents, which may at any moment be relevant; but close attention to decisions as they are given, the reading of a text-book, such as *May's Parliamentary Practice*, and a mastery of the leading principles which have governed the decisions of Speakers on important points of practice, will provide the necessary equipment for any Member who wishes to pass as an authority on this branch of Parliamentary work. It is remarkable how few Members interest themselves in these technicalities. The ordinary procedure is simple and easily assimilated, and a few weeks' attendance will soon enable a new Member to take his share in the proceedings without any fear of error or breach of etiquette; but the more recondite matters of the law are the study, I will not say of a Parliamentary lifetime, but certainly of some years. One would suppose that by this time every possible point of dispute in procedure must have arisen and have been decided, and that there could be nothing new on which to seek a decision from the Chair. It is not so, however, for every session produces a crop, varying, it is true, in quantity, of fresh points and fresh decisions, and at the end of a few years these find themselves embodied in that great work, *May's Parliamentary Practice*, which, first produced in 1844, has now reached its thirteenth edition. Of course, as fresh procedure is

evolved to suit new conditions, it is included in the new editions of *May*, the M.P.'s bible. The Speaker is presumed to be acquainted with this mass of material; but the House is indulgent, and if he pleads for time to consult precedents, it is always accorded; he must however be prepared to give a decision on such matters as do not admit of delay.

The maintenance of order, which is essential to assure full and unfettered discussion in a deliberative assembly, is a matter on which it is impossible to lay down any rigid principles for guidance. Everything depends upon the atmosphere. It may be necessary at times for the Speaker to be very vigilant and immediately check the slightest divergence from the strict path of relevancy; at other times a not too rigid interpretation of relevancy may ease a strained situation or assist progress; and a blind eye or a deaf ear may be more useful than too keen an exercise of the gifts of vision and hearing. Irrelevancy is the chief temptation of Parliamentary nature; but, whilst it is permissible to make allowance for some degree of this infirmity, it is imperative not to permit too serious a divergence from the straight course of relevant argument, for in such a case every speaker who follows the first offender in debate, is certain to run up the siding after him, neglecting the main line, and the pointsman may find it difficult to get the trains running again along the through track.

As to repetition, there is a vast amount of that commodity, but the difficulty of repressing or preventing it is almost insuperable. There is a Standing Order against repetition, which, if literally enforced, would keep debate within very narrow limits, but the enforcement of this rule is beyond human capacity. A good deal of the repetition which takes place is unintentional, a good deal

is legitimate, a good deal is the statement of a previous argument from a different point of view; but some, no doubt, is deliberate and for purely dilatory purposes. In the last-named case the Standing Order can and should be applied.

Amongst the most fruitful sources of disorder are the unmannerly interruptions and offensive personalities, which I regret to think have much increased in the half century of public life of which I have experience. They are a game at which two parties can play, and if one side kicks off, it is certain the other will respond, and when the ball is once in play the referee will find much difficulty in stopping the scrimmage. They should therefore be repressed as rapidly and as frequently as possible.

The Speaker, as his ancient title implies, was in the early days of the House of Commons the man who was chosen by his fellow-members to speak for them, whether in addressing the Sovereign, or reprimanding offenders brought to the bar of the House, or conveying the thanks of the House to distinguished persons or communicating congratulations or condolences. To a considerable extent these duties have ceased to be performed by the Speaker. He no longer addresses the Sovereign nor sums up the work of the Session on the occasion of a prorogation. If occasion should arise for the former, the House passes an address to the Sovereign, which is presented by Privy Councillors. When the prorogation takes place no speeches are made except by the Sovereign, whose speech is read by the Commissioners appointed for the purpose. The Speaker still censures or admonishes offenders at the bar. I witnessed this occurrence once or twice during my predecessor's period of office, but I am glad to think that this disagreeable duty never fell upon me. The House is seldom dignified or at its best in its

dealings with outsiders brought to the bar for reproof, and there is a growing disinclination to enforce its authority in this way. Thanks, congratulations and condolences are now generally conveyed by formal communications and not by word of mouth. But whilst in these matters the duties of the Speaker have decreased, in what may be called the domestic economy of the House his duties have increased. Points of order fall often thick as leaves in Vallombrosa and require to be immediately swept up. Supplementary questions, often carefully prepared, or designed not so much to elucidate the matter in hand as to show the cleverness of the questioner, require to be carefully watched. Herein lies one of the Speaker's great difficulties, for until the question has been put, the Speaker (not having the gift of divination) cannot tell whether the question is a genuine desire for more light or only a cracker intended to cause diversion, disturbance and dismay.

Amongst the other important duties of the Chair the following may be mentioned:—The Speaker must decline to submit motions which infringe the rules; he must decide whether a motion is one of privilege or not; whether a division is frivolously claimed or is genuine; whether a proposed instruction to a committee is in order or not; whether a motion for the adjournment of the House in order to call attention to a definite matter of urgent public importance comes within those conditions or not; whether a Bill should proceed as a public or as a private Bill; whether amendments made to a Bill by the House of Lords violate the privileges of the House of Commons or not; and a number of similar technical matters on which it would be tedious to dwell. The granting or withholding of the closure is another source of considerable anxiety to the occupant of the Chair.

Have the Opposition had a full opportunity of stating their case? Have they made the best of their opportunity? Is there anything more which could be usefully said? Has the subject received its full quota of time in view of the total amount of time available for discussion? These and similar problems present themselves to the Speaker and must be solved in his own mind before he can accept the motion that "the question be now put." It is obvious that no hard and fast rule can be laid down on these matters, and that in each case the Speaker must use his best judgment and discretion.

In the old days, up to about 1860, a point of order was seldom sprung upon the Chair. The Speaker was given full notice beforehand of what was in store for him and was able, with the assistance of the clerks of the House, to prime himself with the answer. There is a story of Speaker Denison who, being suddenly confronted with an unexpected question of order whilst in the Chair, summoned to his aid the Clerk of the House, Sir Denis le Marchant, but was only able to obtain from him the enigmatical reply, "I should advise you, sir, to be very guarded in your reply." My experience of the clerks at the table has been more fortunate. I have found them to be of the greatest assistance and the repositories of a vast amount of Parliamentary lore and precedent; but, when all is said and done, in nine cases out of ten the Speaker must rely upon his own knowledge and judgment in a critical situation.

It is his duty to supervise the Votes and Proceedings, which are daily issued, and to sign them; but except in unusual circumstances, this duty is performed for him by the clerks at the table, who are often detained for some considerable time after the welcome cry of "Who goes home?" has resounded through the lobbies.

The supervision of the Official Reports of the Debates, formerly known as *Hansard*, is a matter in the charge of the Speaker, and though he is seldom called upon to give a decision as to the admissibility or otherwise of portions of the recorded utterances of Members, his own rulings are at once brought to him for inspection, and, if necessary, correction.

The allocation of seats in the Reporters' gallery is within the jurisdiction of the Speaker. It is not a simple operation, for the claims of the component parts of the Empire, the relative demands of town and country, of the daily and weekly Press, of morning and evening papers, and of course of party organs, have to be taken into consideration. The space available is very limited, and now that many newspapers, sometimes even of different political complexion, are owned by one man or by a syndicate, the complication becomes more complicated and the difficulty of satisfying applicants more insoluble.

In the old House of Commons there was no Reporters' gallery and there were no reporters. A gallery was first instituted in the temporary chamber, erected after the fire of 1834, and introduced into the existing chamber in 1844, when the Houses of Parliament were completed for use.

The hours during which the Speaker has to remain in the Chair are long, and often seem very long. The "Rolliad" had the following lines on Speaker Cornwall (1780–1789):—

> Like sad Prometheus fastened to the rock,
> In vain he looks for pity to the clock,
> In vain th' effects of strengthening porter tries,
> And nods to Bellamy for fresh supplies.

Personally I never tried Speaker Cornwall's remedy, the soporific effects of which might have been disastrous,

but the first two lines of the stanza were often in my memory during long debates. "Bellamy" was the refreshment contractor, before the House had organized its own refreshment department.

Before Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman's alteration in the hours was adopted I used to sit daily from 2.30 p.m. until 7.30 p.m. without a break—five hours at a stretch—and again from 9 p.m. to midnight, or until such time as the House rose. After the change, the House met at 2.45 and the sitting continued till 11.30 p.m. and often later, but the tea interval and an hour or so for dinner afforded much relief.

One of the disadvantages of the Speakership is the sense of absence of freedom, which the daily sittings for long hours imposes: the feeling that there is no escape, that you are cabined, cribbed, confined; that, unless very exceptional circumstances should arise, you must be either in the Chair or immediately available in case of your presence being required.

Up to the year 1855, if the Speaker happened to be ill, the House could not sit, as no person was authorized to take the Chair, and it became necessary, in the event of his prolonged illness, for a temporary Speaker to be formally appointed, who resigned his position on the convalescence of the original Speaker; but by an Act of Parliament of that year it was enacted that the Chairman of Ways and Means should be empowered to sit and act as Deputy Speaker when so requested.

On the other hand, when the House has been adjourned in the autumn or prorogued, the vacation is a real vacation; there is no work during the recess; you are again a free man. In this matter the Speaker has an advantage over a Cabinet Minister, who can seldom enjoy a real holiday. The only duty which ever falls to

the lot of a Speaker during the recess is to issue an occasional writ for the election of a new Member in the case of death, elevation to the Peerage or acceptance of office. This matter involves some little care in seeing that the necessary formalities have been complied with, but is neither a frequent nor a lengthy process.

It is well known that our Constitution provides no method whereby a Member can resign his seat. The situation is circumvented by the acceptance of an "office of profit under the Crown," which by an old Act of Parliament disqualifies a Member from sitting and compels the issue of a new writ; and by custom the stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds or of the Manor of Northstead are held to be offices of profit, although as a matter of fact no profit attaches to either; but as the writ grants the office "together with all wages, fees, allowances, etc.," this is sufficient to convert the sinecure into a technical "office of profit."

A rather curious discovery was made by Sir C. P. Ilbert during my tenure of the Speakership. It was customary to describe the Chiltern Hundreds as being the three Chiltern Hundreds of Stoke, Desborough and Bonenham, but Sir C. P. Ilbert, who resided in the neighbourhood of that district, was doubtful about the exact locality of the last named place, and on investigation it appeared that there was no such hundred or place, and that what was evidently intended was Burnham. At some time or other there must have been a slip made in copying the form, which resulted in the error having crept in; but having once crept in, it had persisted for many years, until I authorized an amendment, restoring the writ to its proper form.

Amongst the extraneous duties which the Speaker is sometimes called upon to perform is the interpretation of

points of order arising in the Legislatures of the Dominions. They present an additional difficulty, as the custom or unwritten law of these legislatures is not present to his mind, and, in the absence of this information, it is not always easy to visualize the exact position. It is, however, a tribute to the Speaker's great position that the Overseas Parliamentary authorities should seek his judgment in these matters.

It would be possible to enumerate at considerable length the many and multifarious duties of the Speaker, but enough has been said to give an idea of the important and responsible position which he holds, which may be described in one concluding sentence, viz. that he is the guardian of the privileges of the House as well as those of its Members.

CHAPTER XIX

1906-1907

The New Parliament—Changes in Arrangements—Harcourt's Innovations —Lord Goschen—General Botha—D.C.L. Degree at Oxford.

1906

The Unionist Government having resigned in December of the previous year, and Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman having formed his Ministry, the long-delayed General Election took place in January. My return for Mid-Cumberland was unopposed.

On the 13th of January, the day of nomination, the Cumberland Hounds met at Hutton John, and in order, that I might join in the sport, as well as put in an appearance at the nomination, I had to attend the latter in hunting costume. My proposer, Mr. H. Riley, and I, attired in pink, attended the High Sheriff, handed in the nomination papers, waited the prescribed time, heard the declaration of my election and then hurried off to join the hounds.

The House met on the 13th of February, and I was unanimously elected Speaker, being proposed by my old Cumberland colleague and friend, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, and seconded by Mr. C. Stuart Wortley. In thanking Sir Wilfrid for his kindly references to myself, I said that although there might be some doubt as to whether he was or was not technically the "Father," we should all be agreed that he was the grandfather of the House.

One of my first duties was to appoint the Speaker's

Chaplain, and here a slight hitch occurred. When I was first elected, in the previous year, I had written a diplomatic letter to the Chaplain, asking him to continue in the office, which he then held, until the conclusion of the Parliament, intending to replace Canon Wilberforce, with whom I had not an intimate or even a close acquaintance, by a dignitary of the Church with whom I was well acquainted and who happened to be also admirably suited for the position. When, however, I intimated this desire to Canon Wilberforce, he resented it strongly and induced the Prime Minister to intervene on his behalf. Being naturally anxious to start the new Parliament on good terms with the Prime Minister, I did not feel that the matter was one which I could press very strongly, and I yielded to his representations. The Prime Minister pointed out that the claims of the Canon to a deanery were strong and that in all probability a deanery would fall vacant before the lapse of many months, and that whilst he (the Prime Minister) could give no promise, I could rest assured that the Chaplain's claims to preferment in the Church would not be overlooked. I accordingly appointed Canon Wilberforce. The sequel to this story was, that although on two occasions a deanery was offered to him, once by Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman and once by Mr. Asquith (to whom I had confided what had taken place) the Canon declined the proffered preferment and remained on as Chaplain of the House and Archdeacon of Westminster until his death in 1915. He was a son of Bishop Wilberforce of Oxford and Winchester fame, an ardent teetotaller, in his youth a keen sportsman and steeplechase rider, an attractive preacher, and the holder of some strange views as to the future life. Towards the end of his life he suffered much from

asthma, and often found it impossible to fulfil his duties in the House of Commons. Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman used occasionally to send me marked passages in the reports of the Canon's sermons where he had propounded some more than usually strange doctrine.

The new Parliament showed a great change in the personnel of its Members. Mr. Balfour's substantial majority had been completely swept away. The Unionist Party was reduced to 157, the Liberals numbered about 370; in addition, the Irish, numbering 80, and the Independent Labour Party, numbering 50, generally voted with the Government, making a solid block of about 500 against which the paltry 150 of the Opposition seemed to beat in vain. But it was not only the disparity of numbers which had a depressing effect on the Opposition, but also the loss of many of their protagonists. Mr. Chaplin, Mr. Brodrick, Mr. Alfred Lyttelton, Sir John Gorst, Sir William Hart Dyke, and Mr. Balfour himself had all lost their seats. Amongst the Free Trade Unionists Lord Hugh Cecil and Mr. Gibson Bowles had also fallen. The Opposition was thus left diminished, dispirited, and still disunited. The ranks of the Government supporters were not only swollen to repletion, but they contained a number of ardent Radicals, who had hitherto repeatedly failed to secure election, and having now at last reached the Promised Land, were determined to gather in all its riches and with as little delay as possible.

The Labour Party had also increased considerably in numbers, but a large section of it was indistinguishable from the Liberal Party, and acted largely, if not entirely, in accord with it. Some members of the Labour Party even joined the Government. Sir Henry Campbell

Bannerman told me an amusing story of how, whilst he was in process of forming his Cabinet, he had sent for a prominent member of the Labour Party, had talked to him for some time on the general situation, and had then suggested that A.B. (as I will call him) should join his Government. A.B., on receiving the offer, rose from his chair, walked across to C.B., shook him warmly by the hand and said, " Sir 'Enery, that's the most popular thing you've done yet."

The vastly preponderating numbers of the Government majority rendered it somewhat overbearing, impatient of opposition, and contemptuous and derisive towards opponents. A considerable section of the House had come into it with a suspicion of its forms of procedure, some with a determination to bring them into ridicule, and a few with no great partiality towards obedience to its rules or desire to carry them out. Having been used to Congresses and Conventions, they found considerable difficulty in adjusting themselves to the calmer and more dilatory proceedings of the House. They sought to emphasize the executive rather than the deliberative attributes of the Chamber. Almost all the newcomers were wholly unacquainted with the rules, written and unwritten, of the House, or with its forms and etiquette. In my capacity as Speaker it was, of course, my duty to maintain and enforce the former, and instil a proper regard for the latter. In order not to irritate or create what the newspapers call " scenes," it was often necessary to use great forbearance, to assume an ignorance which was not wholly genuine, and to put the telescope to the blind eye. I am a pretty good hand at recognizing faces, but the large accession of fresh physiognomies—at first sight all very much alike—made it difficult for some little time to fit the

name to the face and *vice versa*. I remember an amusing incident when Mr. John Williams, a new M.P., having expressed through the Whips a desire to speak in the debate on the Address, I asked where he was sitting and from which seat would he rise to speak, so that I might be sure to call him. I was informed that he was sitting in the second seat on the second bench below the gangway on the Government side. When the pause came, a bevy of new Members arose, each with a maiden speech to deliver. I looked to the second seat on the second bench below the gangway on the Government side, and there stood a new Member sure enough, so in stentorian tones I called out, "Mr. John Williams." To my horror and consternation they all sat down. Mr. John Williams was not in the covey. I had missed the lot and not brought down a bird. But I was in difficulties, for not having foreseen the mischance of Mr. John Williams being absent, I was not prepared with another name and could not call any of those who had risen. Fortunately an old Member, Mr. J. W. Wilson, seeing my difficulty, rose to speak, and I called him. Oddly enough, his Christian names are John William.

In a remarkably short time the new Members got accustomed to the procedure and soon became as particular as the older ones in paying regard to the unwritten rules and reprobating breaches of etiquette.

I am not generally inappreciative of a humorous observation, but on one occasion I must confess to a dullness for which I have never forgiven myself. The Attorney-General, Sir J. Lawson Walton, had, as the representative of the Government, introduced a Bill dealing with Trade Disputes. The Bill, though supported by the Liberal Party, had not found much favour amongst the Labour benches, and about a month

later the Solicitor General, Sir W. Robson, was instructed to take charge of it and to indicate very material changes in the principal operative clause, which compelled the Government supporters to unsay a good deal of what they had formerly said. Whilst the discussion was going on, Sir H. Campbell Bannerman came to me and said, "Have you detected a strong smell of leek soup in the House to-day?" I gave him a matter-of-fact reply in the negative, and it was not until he had passed out behind my chair that the inner meaning of his observation was revealed to me.

On the same evening we were treated to the first of the Suffragette scenes, which later became so frequent and childish. On this occasion, whilst Sir Samuel Evans was engaged in talking out a motion of Mr. Keir Hardie's in favour of Women's Suffrage—a motion which had only come on at a late period of the evening—a disturbance arose in the Ladies' Gallery. There were shouts and interruptions, and one lady thrust a flag out through the grille of the gallery, bearing the inscription "Justice to Women." The police were called in to assist in clearing the gallery. As the gallery was up above my chair, which is covered by a large canopy, I could not see what was taking place, but Mr. William Redmond professed to have observed some rough treatment by the police, and appealed to me. I had to explain that owing to my position in the Chair, I was the only person in the House who could not see what was going on.

The hours of sitting and some minor points of procedure were dealt with during the Session, and a considerable improvement effected. Under Mr. Balfour's régime we used to have two sittings daily, viz. from 2 to 7.30 p.m., and from 9 to 12 p.m.; but the system

did not work well, for divisions often carried the first sitting on and members could not leave the House until 7.45, or even 8 o'clock, and it was hopeless to expect to get diners in town back by 9 o'clock; so that a good deal of time was wasted at the commencement of the second sitting by Members being put up to talk until the Government majority had come back from dinner.

The new arrangement, which I strongly recommended to the Prime Minister, was to make no break for the dinner hour, but to have a continuous sitting. I pointed out to him that the only people who would be affected by the change were the Chairman of Ways and Means and myself, and that as we both had understudies, there would, as a rule, be no difficulty in our taking some time off for dinner; and if this could not be arranged and the worst came to the worst, the Speaker or Chairman would for once have to go without his dinner. By the new arrangement, therefore, the House met at 2.45 p.m. and sat continuously till 11.30 p.m. (opposed business concluding at 11 o'clock). This scheme has been found to work well and is still in force.

Sir H. Campbell Bannerman was not a believer in what he contemned, the week-end habit. He tried to persuade the House to revert to Wednesday for the short sitting and have a full day's sitting on Friday; but the House would have none of it and preferred Mr. Balfour's long week-end. The new Members of the Labour Party who had no fixed abode in London, supported the long week-end, as it gave them an opportunity of attending to their official duties in connection with their local unions as well as of returning to their domestic joys in the provinces.

Another novelty which was introduced into our daily procedure was a new system of taking divisions,

invented, or at all events recommended to me, by Mr. L. V. Harcourt, First Commissioner of Works. Under the old system no division could commence until all the Members intending to vote were in the House and the doors were shut, nor could enumeration begin until the House was cleared. Under Mr. Harcourt's plan two minutes were allowed between the first and second putting of the question, in order to give time for strangers to withdraw, to settle upon tellers, and so forth. After the lapse of the two minutes, the question having been again put, the division proceeded at once, without any further interval, and members not wishing to vote were not compelled to leave the Chamber; but at the end of six minutes the order to lock the doors was given, and no Member who had failed to reach the Aye or No lobby could then vote. The adoption of this system of voting was a great advantage at the moment, because the Government majority being of gigantic proportions, the lobby into which they were herded and in which they had to wait, became often unbearably crowded. One objection which was taken to Mr. Harcourt's plan was that a member might possibly vote in error in both lobbies; but, if he did so, it did not signify, for his votes would neutralize each other, and the result was not affected. This actually happened on more than one occasion.

Mr. Harcourt was an excellent First Commissioner of Works; he took the greatest interest in promoting the comfort of Members, in making improvements and in increasing the amenities of the place. The collection of interesting mezzotints and portraits, which are now displayed on the walls of the rooms and lobbies, is to be credited to his assiduity and to his persuasive powers in inducing some of the wealthier Members to present

pictures and engravings of Parliamentary interest.

Another innovation which was made by Mr. Harcourt was the appropriation to Government officials, on attendance at the House, of the seats under the gallery on the Government side immediately behind the Speaker's chair. These seats were generally known as the Churchwardens' Pew, and were mostly used by members who were not so interested in the proceedings as to feel the absolute necessity of remaining awake. Some objection was taken to this innovation, when it was first made, and Mr. Rutherford brought the matter to an issue by "spying strangers." On my putting the question "that strangers be ordered to withdraw," the decision passed in the negative; but on the following day the matter was again raised, and it was not finally determined until the change was formally adopted, upon a substantive resolution moved by Mr. Harcourt approving the change. The officials had formerly sat under the gallery at the other end of the Chamber, an inconvenient place for Ministers who desired to obtain information or assistance from them.

Mr. Harcourt's speech in introducing, under the so-called ten minutes rule, the Bill for abolishing plural voting must be a unique instance of a man making his maiden speech from the Government bench.

The first part of the Session came to an end on the 4th of August, the House having got through a mass of work, including about fifty measures passed into law, and having disposed of Mr. Birrell's Education Bill and sent it up to the Lords. It had not, however, manifested much enthusiasm towards economy, for in one week it had voted resolutions in favour of the feeding of school-children, of placing returning officers' expenses on the public exchequer, of giving to Members

the right to frank their letters, of granting old age pensions to aged persons, and of giving to every member a salary of £300 a year. These proposals, which at the time appeared somewhat extravagant and unreasonable, have almost all of them become accomplished facts, and the £300 has been increased to £400.

The House, which at first was inclined to be somewhat turbulent and unruly, had quieted down considerably; I had made the acquaintance of most of the new Members and the friendship of many. I had endeavoured to carry out the rules without pedantry or narrowness, and the House had felt, I think, that I was to be trusted and had given me its confidence.

Just before the House rose for the autumn holiday, a Conference, summoned by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, met in the Royal Gallery in the Palace of Westminster, Mr. Philip Stanhope (subsequently Lord Weardale) being in the chair. King Edward had arranged to receive all the delegates at Buckingham Palace, and requested the Lord Chancellor (Lord Loreburn) and myself to attend him. The King, who, as is well known, was always very particular about dress, had suggested that we should attend in wig and gown, with our respective maces, but in morning clothes. I ventured, however, to submit to His Majesty that this would be an unusual and peculiar garb, and eventually it was decided that we should appear in frock coats, the dress worn by the delegates themselves, and without maces, and at the *levée* which His Majesty held we stood on either side of him whilst the delegates were all presented.

When the House rose my wife and I went to Hutton John and spent the summer there. We paid our usual visit to Wynyard at the beginning of September, and met most of the usual party, including Lord St. Aldwyn,

Sir William Anson, Lord Ridley and Sir Maurice de Bunsen. "The First" was a very hot day. We were shooting partridges. In the afternoon Sir William Anson, who was feeling the heat somewhat, suggested to the keeper that he would like to retire from the sport and go home. The keeper, however, protested that our host would not look favourably upon the defection of one of the guns, as he was hoping that day to make a record bag. Sir William accordingly, but unwillingly, continued to persevere until, about half an hour later, the keeper returned to him and announced that one of the dogs having just died of the heat, he thought it was better that Sir William should seek the shelter of the game cart and go home with the dead dog.

Lord St. Aldwyn, who was not one of the guns, accompanied us all day, attired in a hard felt hat and a dark-coloured tail coat. As he was then in his seventieth year, it was a remarkable performance in a temperature of about 80 degrees.

Just before the House met again in October I was admitted to the Skinners' Company as an honorary freeman. My proposer was Mr. Causton, one of the Liberal Whips and now Lord Southwark; and, after the ceremony, there was a banquet in their noble hall on Dowgate Hill, so tastefully decorated by Mr. Brangwyn, at which the Master (Mr. Burke), Lord Crewe, Lord Courtney and myself were amongst the after-dinner speakers.

The autumn Session was occupied by making further progress with the work left unfinished in the summer, and with the proceedings on the Lords' amendments to the Education Bill. These amendments had so completely transmogrified the Bill, that the Government felt that to attempt to consider them separately would

have been a hopeless and endless task, and preferred to reject them *en bloc*, throwing upon the House of Lords the responsibility for the loss of the Bill, which the House of Lords was not unwilling to bear, as it was by no means a popular measure.

I was unfortunately unable to be present at the final sittings of the House, as I was temporarily ill, and Mr. Emmott, the Chairman of Ways and Means and Deputy Speaker, took my place and brought the Session to a close.

1907

Parliament met at the usual time in February, and found that some changes had been made in the Ministerial hierarchy. Mr. Bryce had been appointed Ambassador to the United States, and had been succeeded in the Irish Office by Mr. Birrell. The Education Office, which Mr. Birrell had quitted, was taken over by Mr. McKenna, who was succeeded as Secretary to the Treasury by Mr. Walter Runciman. Lord Goschen, an old acquaintance and friend, had died just before Parliament met. During the stirring times of twenty years before, when Mr. Gladstone first propounded his Home Rule schemes, Mr. Goschen had become extremely prominent as an opponent and as one of the ablest and most popular platform speakers of the day. It is singular that he should have obtained so leading a position, for he suffered from a husky enunciation, excessively short sight, an ungainly deportment and a very Hebraic cast of countenance. Although I believe that he was not of Jewish descent, yet it must be confessed that he presented that appearance. Mr. Labouchere was never tired of teasing him upon the matter, and never failed to "get a rise" out of his

victim. Mr. Goschen's strong points, which appealed to the public, were his singular independence and honesty of purpose, and the skill with which he could retort on interrupters. In fact, he rather courted interruption and enjoyed it. As a financial expert he had a high reputation, and when in 1886 Lord Randolph Churchill "forgot Goschen" and made a vacancy by his resignation of the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, it was felt that Mr. Goschen was the right man in the right place. His finance, however, though always sound, was never brilliant. It was my good fortune to have known Mr. Goschen pretty well for many years, and to have been a frequent visitor at Seacox Heath. He was a charming host and delighted both to hear and tell good stories.

About this time there also died Mr. T. D. Bolton, who was Member for a Derbyshire division, a solicitor, whose offices were immediately below the chambers in Temple Gardens which I had once had. I mention this gentleman because, although I do not doubt that he was a most excellent and worthy person, he was the only M.P. who ever declined, when introduced to me in the formal way by the Clerk of the House, to shake hands with me. I was never able to discover his supposed grievance, but I believe it to have been due to this, that when in a previous Session he had made a complaint to me about the action of one of the doorkeepers, I had replied that I would make full enquiries. I suppose he thought that as he had told his story, no further enquiry was called for.

At the beginning of this Session, in addition to the usual dinners given by the Speaker to the Government, the Opposition, Privy Councillors, and unofficial Members, I instituted the custom of giving a certain number

of official luncheons to members of the Labour Party, who, it was at that time supposed, held some rooted objection, on principle, to the wearing of uniform (an objection since dispelled). In addition to the Labour Members, I also invited some of the sterner Radical section, who held similar views, and declined to wear swords, even Court swords. I believe that these functions, which began at 1 p.m. and finished in plenty of time before the meeting of the House, gave as much satisfaction to my guests as pleasure to myself. They enabled me to establish a better acquaintance with many Members with whom otherwise I should not have been brought into close contact.

At the beginning of this Session Mr. Whitley, destined afterwards to become my successor in the Speakership, first took office as a Lord of the Treasury, and learnt the foundations of the procedure of the House, of which he afterwards became past master.

Early in the Session we had a foretaste of what was in store for us later. On the 20th of March there was an all-night sitting, which, beginning at 2.45 p.m. on Wednesday, lasted until 5.45 p.m. on Thursday afternoon. The Opposition scored off the Government by making the usual Thursday sitting impossible, but the Government retaliated by taking a sitting on the Saturday. I was the unfortunate victim of both. The Government had certainly tried the House very severely, for they had combined in their programme for the Wednesday sitting a debate on the new procedure rules, a few miscellaneous motions, the third reading of the Consolidated Fund Bill, and the committee stage of the Army Annual Bill. Any old Parliamentarian would recognize in such a menu enough for at least two, probably three, Parliamentary meals. But the Govern-

ment were at this time very badly served in the Whips' office, and this led to much friction and delay, which under more fortunate circumstances would have been quite unnecessary.

It had become almost a Parliamentary tradition, certainly a custom, to sit up all night on the committee stage of the Army Annual Bill. The contents of the Bill do not justify this prolonged discussion, as there is very seldom any new matter in the Bill. The trouble arose in or about 1885, when for some reason which I do not now recall, Mr. Hanbury, who was then a prominent free lance of the Opposition, led an attack on the Army Annual Bill, and kept the House sitting all night. This was not forgotten when Mr. Hanbury himself became Secretary to the Treasury, and was under the obligation to sit up and defend the measure which he had formerly attacked; and so it has gone on almost ever since. Each side thinks it their duty to maintain the custom and put the other to all the inconveniences of a bedless night.

The Colonial Conference met in London during the summer. General Louis Botha attended it for the first time as the representative of the Transvaal, and shared with Sir Wilfred Laurier the interest and admiration of the public. I had the pleasure of sitting next to General Botha at a dinner given by the Prime Minister in Downing Street to the Colonial representatives, and on the other side sat Sir Robert Borden, with whom the British public subsequently became very well acquainted. A day or two later there was a big function in Westminster Hall for the Colonial delegates. General Botha, who was rather nervous as to his capability for speaking in English, proposed in Dutch the toast of the Mother of Parliaments, to which the Lord Chancellor

(Lord Loreburn) and I did our best to respond, but the acoustic properties of that ancient building, before the invention of "loud speakers," made the hearing of speeches a very difficult operation.

After the luncheon, my wife and I had the pleasure of entertaining the Colonial visitors at the Speaker's House, when Sir Joseph Ward, the New Zealand Premier, and Mr. Deakin, the Australian, as well as the others whom I have named, found time to look in and meet a number of friends.

Another function, to which I must refer owing to its somewhat remarkable character, was a big public dinner, which my wife was chiefly instrumental in organizing, on behalf of the funds of Westminster Hospital, which lies so close to the Houses of Parliament. The dinner took place in the hall of the Inner Temple; the Lord Chancellor took the chair at the head of one of the numerous tables which had been placed about in the hall. At our own table we had the pleasure of the company of the Prime Minister, Sir Weetman and Lady Pearson, Mr. and Mrs. Raphael, Mrs. Bischoffsheim, Lord Wandsworth, Lady Mabel Howard, and others. After dinner we adjourned to the library for coffee, cigars and music. The result of the appeal was that a sum of over £6,000 was collected for the hospital, in which many of the Parliamentary officials resident in the Palace of Westminster took a deep interest.

During the Session the Opposition, which had been cowed and disheartened by the severe defeat experienced the previous year, began to pluck up courage and, although overwhelmed by numbers in the division lobby, made a good show in debate. Mr. Arthur Balfour, who, on his first appearances as Member for the City, had been very coldly received by the new House, was

indefatigable in attendance and versatile in debate. The chief topics were a further amendment of the Procedure rules by which all Bills, except a few money Bills, were automatically sent to one or other of the four standing committees then set up; Mr. Haldane's Bill establishing the Territorial Force; and four Bills dealing with land questions in England, Scotland and Ireland. Mr. Haldane worked like a Trojan in the interests of his Bill, both in the House itself and in addressing numerous meetings in the country, explaining and advocating its provisions. Some of these measures were vigorously debated and we had numerous all-night sittings, and some closure by compartments. The Irish Devolution Bill, as it was called, a sort of modified Home Rule, introduced by Mr. Birrell, was short-lived, the Convention called together in Dublin to consider it unanimously rejecting it. The four Land Bills were the subject of a good deal of acrimonious debate towards the end of the Session, and after much wrangling with the Lords, passed for the most part in a modified form. As I am not concerned to record the details of this legislation, I spare my readers a recital of their tempestuous careers. We had an all-night sitting in order finally to dispose of the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill, and we had a week's debate upon a Government resolution, laying down the principle that the House of Lords' veto on Bills should be strictly limited, a principle which three years later was embodied in the Parliament Act.

Amongst the minor matters with which I was concerned was a case of alleged breach of privilege by Mr. Hugh Lea, Member for St. Pancras. Mr. Hugh Lea was a tall, good-looking man, who had formerly been a private in the Guards. His manner in addressing the

House was not sympathetic, and he was a persistent but unpopular personage. Arising out of an alleged fraudulent contract with the Admiralty by the firm of the Ayrshire Foundry Company, one of whose directors had received the honour of knighthood, Mr. Lea published a letter the implication of which was that the honour had been given in return for a large sum of money subscribed to the fund of the Liberal Party. Lord Robert Cecil raised the question as one of breach of privilege by Mr. Lea. As the letter contained the imputation that the Government Whips exercised a control over the votes of Members who had received honours, I left the matter to the House to decide, and by a majority of about two to one they decided to take no action, both the Prime Minister and Mr. Balfour having denied that any such coercion had ever been exercised by the Whips of their respective parties.

It was during this Session that the special clock was first brought into use which, placed on the table of the House, records the periods of time allotted by the rules for the several stages of a division. The old two-minute hour-glass had become cumbrous for the purpose and was displaced by Mr. Harcourt's new invention. "Tempora mutantur nos et mutamur in illis."

The Government having resolved not to hold an autumn Session this year, the House sat until the end of August, but was eventually prorogued on the 28th of that month.

My brief holiday at Whitsuntide had been spent on board Mr. Alfred Farquhar's yacht the *Medusa*, when we made a delightful trip up the Seine to Rouen, Mr. Richard Bagot, the novelist, and Mr. Alfred Ainger, the quondam Eton Master, being fellow-guests. At Rouen we were welcomed and hospitably entertained by

Monsieur R. Waddington (brother of M. Waddington, so long the French Ambassador in London), and himself a Senator of France and President of the Chamber of Commerce of Rouen.

The autumn holiday was spent at Hutton John, with occasional country house visits, of which visits to the Londonderrys at Wynyard; to Mr. Victor and Lady Evelyn Cavendish at Holker, an ancient possession of the Lowther family; to Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Lee at Glendoe, for some deerstalking; to the Duke of Grafton's historical house of Euston for some partridge-shooting with Mr. Pearson Gregory and Mr. A. W. Ridley, who occupied it every autumn for many years; to Lord Henry Bentinck's beautiful house at Underley in Westmorland; and to the Duke of Norfolk's recently restored and at length completed castle at Arundel, have left pleasant and permanent recollections.

We were also invited to a banquet at Windsor, given by Their Majesties to celebrate the visit of the Kaiser and Kaiserin. In the speech which he made on that occasion the Kaiser was profuse in his protestations of his peaceful disposition and aspirations, and I have no doubt that at the moment he was sincere. After dinner I had some conversation with both of the two distinguished guests. The Kaiser spent most of the evening amongst the British Generals, many of whom had been invited to meet him. I recalled to his memory old days in Berlin when we had been playmates at Charlottenburg.

At the end of this year I resigned the position of Chairman of Quarter Sessions for the County of Cumberland, which I had held for some years, as I found that the duties of the post could not be always adequately discharged in conjunction with those of the

Speakership. The Magistrates were kind enough to invite me to sit for my portrait, which they desired to hang in the Courts at Carlisle. At my suggestion they selected M. Laszlo as the painter, and he came to stay with us at Hutton John for some sittings. He did a rapid three-hour sketch on brown cardboard, an excellent likeness, which he gave to my wife as a memento of his visit, and he began a large three-quarter length of myself in wig and gown, which was finished in the following year at his studio in Campden Hill, but for which I had to give him a considerable number of sittings. In fact, I got so bored with the sittings and felt that they occupied so much of my precious spare time, that I arranged that my butler should represent me for the hands and the gown and other unfinished parts of the picture. I was much amused later, when the picture was duly presented to me and by me to the County, to read in the criticism of one of the Cumberland papers that M. Laszlo was evidently a great artist, for not only was the face an admirable portrait of the Speaker, but the artist had revealed in his treatment of the hands the thorough grasp which he had achieved of the character of his sitter.

The only other event of any importance to myself which occurred during the year was the conferment upon me of the honorary degree of D.C.L. by the University of Oxford. My old friend, Mr. George Curzon, had succeeded Lord Goschen as Chancellor of the University, and invited me to receive the honour of this degree in company with Prince Arthur of Connaught, General Booth, Rudyard Kipling, Mark Twain, Sir Evelyn Wood, Lord Alverstone, Mr. Whitelaw Reid, Sir E. Grey, Dr. Butler, M. Saint-Saens, and some others. Following the usual custom, I had informed

the House of the proposal and obtained leave of absence for the day. Arrayed in our Doctor's caps and gowns, we marched in procession from Magdalen College to the Divinity School, and then to the Theatre, which was very crowded. The public orator introduced us each in a brief Latin speech, abounding in superlatives far beyond our deserts, and in a Latin formula the Chancellor pronounced the mystic words conferring the degree. The Theatre was crowded and the undergraduates kept up a running commentary of chaff. When I was presented, somebody called out, "Is your house in order, sir?" a clever allusion to the title of a popular play then running at St. James's Theatre. Shortly before the Oxford Encænia a sensation had been caused by the theft from the grand stand at Ascot of the Gold Cup, and when Mark Twain was presented for his degree, a wag called out, "Who stole the Ascot Gold Cup?" an enquiry which neither Mark Twain nor anybody else has ever been able to answer.

Luncheon at All Souls, a garden party at St. John's, and a dinner at Christ Church completed this crowded day.

The most interesting personage of the occasion was Mark Twain. At the Christ Church dinner he was called upon to respond for the guests, but his speech was disappointing, and his humour very forced and unnatural. A few days later I met him again at a breakfast party given in his honour by Lord Avebury, at which Lord Kelvin, Sir Alfred Lyall, Sir Archibald Geikie and Mr. Anthony Hope Hawkins were also present.

During the course of this summer it fell to my lot, as one of the three principal trustees of the British Museum, to take part in some rather delicate negotia-

tions with the director of one of the branches into which the Museum is divided. He had reached the age at which his tenure of office could be either terminated or prolonged at the will of the trustees. Although a very brilliant scientist and lucid writer, he had been a complete failure as an administrator, having never had any experience in that portion of his duties, and his department was in a chaotic state. The difficulty about his retirement was that, having been appointed from outside the Museum and somewhat late in life, he had only had nine years' service, and his pension would have been of very slender proportions. After much negotiation with the Treasury and with himself, we (i.e. Lord Loreburn, the Archbishop of Canterbury and I) were able to obtain a slight increase in the amount and prevailed upon him to take his pension and retire. His Majesty gave him a K.C.B.

CHAPTER XX

1908-1909

Death of my Mother—The Suffragette Agitation—Horatio Bottomley—Very long Session—Visits of Russian and Turkish Delegations—Trip on a Submarine—King Edward VII—Lords reject Finance Bill—Death of Lord Selby.

1908

At the beginning of January I was suddenly summoned from Cumberland to Suffolk by the news of my mother's serious illness, and only arrived just in time to see her breathe her last. My father and mother had a few days previously fallen victims to influenza, and in my mother's case this had developed into pneumonia, with fatal results. She was conscious up to a few hours before the end, but the heart failed and she passed away peacefully. She was in her eightieth year, and had lived an energetic, active life, full of many interests. She had "that which should accompany old age, as honour, love, obedience, troops of friends." She was buried in the churchyard at Campsea Ashe. In the absence of my father, who was not well enough to leave his bed, I was the chief mourner, and all my brothers and sisters were present except my brother Gerard, who was at the time Minister in Morocco. I have already referred to the merits of my mother as a water-colour artist. Her output of work, continued to within a few weeks of her death, was astonishingly prolific, and a few months after her death an exhibition was held in Mr. Beit's house in

Park Lane of a considerable number of her sketches.

Mr. George W. E. Russell, in a little memoir which he wrote, spoke of her as follows: "She was one of the strongest women in the world; astonishingly active and ignorant of the meaning of fatigue. In the discharge of her various duties as wife, mother, hostess, member of Society, mistress of a large establishment, lady bountiful of a rural parish and public-spirited citizen, she laboured incessantly, and with no apparent loss of energy till the last weeks of a protracted life. Energy was indeed her most striking characteristic; and by energy I mean that indefinable gift, rather spiritual than physical, which makes a man or woman live intensely in every nerve and fibre, and throw the whole being into the tasks and interests of the moment.

"Deep under all this exuberant activity there lay a massive foundation of religious faith, and that faith manifested itself in constant effort for the moral and material advancement of her fellow-creatures.

"Farewell, dear lady, high-minded and great-hearted! Your image will not fade from our memory until the whole tablet is blotted."

Mr. Arnold White, an acquaintance of long standing, wrote of her: "Politics, society, art, letters, travel, philanthropy and patriotism made heavy claims on her, but she was always the same—her strength and her goodness were immune from change. The late Baron de Staal said to me, at Sir Robert Morier's funeral, that Mrs. Lowther in his judgment was the strongest Englishwoman he had known in his long career, a tribute to the atmosphere of goodness she created around her. Staunch in friendship, of an iron mind and courage,

pitiful to sorrow, she lived and she died a great Englishwoman."

In consequence of my mother's death I did not give the usual official Speaker's dinners at the commencement of the new Session, but after Easter resumed the luncheons to Labour Members and others, which I had reason to believe would be appreciated.

On the first day of the Session it became my duty to read to the House a letter from a Resident Magistrate in Ireland informing me that he had committed to gaol Mr. Ginnell, M.P., for contempt of Court. Mr. Redmond thereupon sought to move that such committal was a breach of the privileges of the House, but I had to rule that there was no privilege in a Member enabling him to commit contempt of Court with impunity, and that in this matter a Member of Parliament was on the same footing as others. Mr. Ginnell was for several years a prominent Member. Short in stature, violent in his views, always irreproachably dressed in frock coat and top hat, persistent in putting supplementary and often irrelevant questions, he was not *persona grata* to the House as a whole, or even to his own party, with which he seemed to have little or no communication. He had a disconcerting habit of rising to speak when the House was anxious to divide, and was consequently frequently closured. On one occasion I remember him producing a single sheet of notepaper, from which he proceeded to read his speech. Seeing that there was only one sheet, I did not interrupt him in order to call his attention to the impropriety of reading a speech, and I expected that the speech would be brief, but his notes were in shorthand and were written on both sides of the paper, so that the speech took quite a long time to deliver and the rule was

successfully violated. I often found considerable difficulty in enforcing this rule, for it had become the habit even of some of the Front Bench men, who ought to have known better, to read their speeches from a MS. laid upon the box on the table, and when the leaders set such a bad example, it was difficult to reprove lesser lights. Both Sir William Harcourt and Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman were offenders in this respect. It was always recognized that a special pronouncement, often of words agreed upon at the Cabinet, was a legitimate exception, but I have seen (or heard) a whole speech delivered from the Front Bench in this fashion.

The Prime Minister, owing to illness, was unable to attend the sittings of the House, and on the 5th of April resigned, owing to ill health. His death followed about a fortnight later, and on the 27th of April it was my melancholy duty to act as one of the pall-bearers at his funeral, the first portion of which was held in Westminster Abbey. The other pall-bearers were the Prime Minister, the Lord Chancellor, the Marquis of Ripon, Lord Tweedmouth, Mr. Walter Long, Mr. Burt, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Duke of Fife, Mr. John Morley, Lord Aberdeen, and Mr. Sinclair. He was buried at his own home in Perthshire, next to his wife, to whom he had always been devotedly attached.

Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman was a great Parliamentarian, in the sense that he was an admirer of and a believer in the House of Commons as the best instrument for expressing the will of the people. Although he was no orator, he had a happy knack of coining phrases, many of which captured the public fancy and formed part of the Parliamentary small change of the day. "La Duma est morte. Vive la Duma," was his phrase, used to a meeting of the Inter-

Parliamentary Congress just after the dissolution of the first Duma by the Czar. "Methods of barbarism" was the criticism he passed on some of the doings of the British Army in South Africa in the Transvaal War. "Enough of this fooling" was an expression which escaped him in a moment of irritation at some tactical delays, which Mr. Balfour and Mr. Chamberlain had interposed before a fiscal debate early in the 1906 Parliament. The acts for which he will be chiefly remembered are his success in persuading the Duke of Cambridge to resign the Commandership-in-Chief of the Army in 1895, his grant of autonomy to the Transvaal in 1906, and the ability with which he combined the divergent sections of the Liberal and Labour Parties, and led the House of Commons from 1906 to the time of his resignation. There was an occasion, in 1895, when Sir Henry was very anxious to become Speaker, but his party could not spare him and wisely persuaded him to withdraw his claims, foreseeing for him a more important office which his modesty forbade him to anticipate. He was a good French scholar, a great reader of French novels, many of which he from time to time recommended to me, and apt at a French quotation. His brief leadership was more successful than either friend or foe could have expected, and, inverting a phrase of Tacitus, it may be said of him, "Consensu omnium, incapax imperii, nisi imperasset."

The dislocation in Parliamentary proceedings caused by Sir Henry's resignation and death and by the reconstruction of the Government, caused some delay, so that from the 6th to the 28th of April there were no effective sittings of the House. When we resumed at the latter date, Mr. Asquith had become Prime Minister, Mr. Lloyd George Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr.

McKenna First Lord of the Admiralty, and Mr. Winston Churchill President of the Board of Trade. The latter had failed to obtain re-election in Manchester, but had found a seat at Dundee.

The Suffragettes during this Session began to give a good deal of trouble to the authorities and to the police. They assembled at Caxton Hall or elsewhere, and, in disregard of the orders of the House forbidding the assembly of large bodies of persons in the vicinity of Westminster Palace, approached the House in large numbers and sought by various means, including even a Pantechnicon van, to obtain access. Collisions with the police were frequent, and many of the more combative women were arrested and fined or committed to gaol.

The Government bill of fare included an Irish University Bill, a Port of London Bill, a Bill for the Protection of Children, an Eight Hours Bill for Coal Mines, an Old Age Pensions Bill, and the two Scottish Land Bills which had failed to pass in the previous Session. None of these gave me any difficulty except the Old Age Pensions Bill, in which the Lords had inserted some important amendments. I was compelled to rule that as this Bill was in its essence a money Bill, such amendments were " privilege " amendments and inadmissible, a ruling to which the Lords bowed, but only under protest.

The House rose for the autumn recess on the 1st of August.

During the summer my wife and I had had the pleasure of entertaining quite a number of distinguished visitors at the Speaker's House. The Princess of Wales came one day to the gallery and stayed to tea. Another day the Queen, with her sister, the Dowager Empress

of Russia, came to visit the Amateur Art Exhibition which was that year held in our house. M. Paul Sabatier, the well-known author of a well-known work on St. Francis of Assisi, was a guest at luncheon. M. Clemenceau, who had come to London to attend the funeral of Sir H. Campbell Bannerman, came to luncheon on the following day, and we persuaded the American Ambassador and Mrs. Whitelaw Reid, Mrs. Asquith, Sir Edward Grey, Mr. and Mrs. Laszlo and M. and Mme Geoffray (the French First Secretary and his wife) to meet him. M. Clemenceau, who had spent a considerable time as a young man in America, spoke English, or rather American, quite fluently, and was much entertained by Mrs. Asquith's vivid reminiscences of some incidents of her early life. Shortly afterwards we had a visit from Senator Waddington, whom we had met the previous year at Rouen, and from Senator Lodge, whom I had met in New York in 1894.

M. Paderewski, the celebrated pianist, patriot and President of Poland, also came to tea with us on the terrace. Whilst I was showing him my library, he happened to pick up Harry Graham's *Misrepresentative Men* which was lying on my table, and was only moderately amused with the caricature of himself which appears on the cover of the book.

M. Fallières, who was then President of the French Republic, paid a visit to London in May, and I had the pleasure of a conversation with him at Buckingham Palace, where His Majesty had given a banquet in his honour. A day or two later I was bidden to a dinner at the French Embassy, given by M. Cambon, and there I sat next to the celebrated portrait-painter, M. Bonnat, whose picture of Ernest Rénan is world-famed. Another acquaintance, Boutros Pasha, Prime Minister of Egypt,

came to London in June with H.H. the Khedive, and, at the invitation of Mr. Winston Churchill, I had the pleasure of meeting him again and renewing our recollections of the Venice Conference in 1892, where we had acted so cordially together. Not long after, he met with a tragic fate, being assassinated by a fanatical Mohammedan in Cairo.

The interval in the Session caused by the resignation of Sir H. Campbell Bannerman was utilized by me in paying visits first to Paris and then to Dresden. In Paris I took a "'busman's holiday" and visited the Chamber, where I heard the subsequently noted M. Caillaux holding forth, and where I also met and conversed with several of the French politicians whose names during the war became familiar in England: M. Pichon, M. Viviani, M. Cruppi, and M. Clemenceau, the Baron d'Estournelles, whom I had known when Secretary of the French Embassy in London, acting as my introducer. In Dresden, where my wife and I spent the Easter recess, we enjoyed the picture gallery and the opera, and attended a Court concert at the Palace. We also met the King of Saxony at dinner at the British Legation, the other guests being Count Hohenthal, Count and Countess Schönburg, Princess Hanan, Graf and Countess Rex, Count and Countess Vitzthum, and members of Sir M. Findlay's staff. His Majesty, who did not impress me as being very highly endowed intellectually, had considerable difficulty in understanding that I was the Speaker and not the leader of the House of Commons. His mind was chiefly occupied with sport, at which he was an adept. Blackcock shooting in the forest at early dawn was the sport which he most enjoyed. At the Court concert, which we had attended, His Majesty sat in the centre of the

room attended by two pages, who stood behind his chair. The concert was long and the room was hot, and one of the boys suddenly collapsed, overcome by a fainting fit. After the entertainment the King went the round of the guests and we were all presented to him in solemn form. I wore the Speaker's Court uniform, viz. a velvet suit with lace *jabot* and ruffles, and the flash at the back of the neck, which is all that remains of the old tie wig. The Saxons had never seen such a uniform before and were very curious and interested about it.

During the recess, which lasted from the 1st of August to the 12th of October, I was presented with the Freedom of the City of Carlisle. The ceremony took place in the old Town Hall, and a copy of the entry in the roll was given to me in a handsome silver box, most artistically designed, with the arms of the city and my own in coloured enamel, on either side. The Mayor gave a luncheon party afterwards, at which he, Mr. Ernest Page (the Recorder), Mr. Allison (the Member for North Cumberland), Mr. Chance and I spoke. The speeches were of a light and entertaining character, and references were made to the fact, which I had forgotten, that when at Cambridge being asked what I intended to become, I had replied, "Speaker of the House of Commons."

Another interesting function in which I took a leading part was the initiation of a big water scheme for the supply of Penrith. Hayeswater is a little lake in the neighbourhood of Patterdale, at the head of Ullswater. It lies remote from the roads in that district and at a considerable altitude. It is only accessible by a rough mountain path, and up this path we had to climb for about an hour. It is a pretty spot, nestling amongst

the mountains without a habitation in sight. Here I performed the ceremony of cutting the first sod of the new undertaking, and was presented with a handsome silver spade as a memento of the event.

When the House met on the 12th of October, we had been warned that the Suffragettes would make, on the next day, another attempt to enter the precincts, and special orders had been given to the police and to the attendants to be on the alert. Notwithstanding this, one lady succeeded in entering the Chamber. We were engaged on the report stage of the Children's Bill, and whilst I had my eyes directed to some amendment on the Order paper, I suddenly heard a shrill female voice exclaiming, "Leave off discussing the children's question and attend to the women first." When I looked up I saw a woman standing in the middle of the floor, gesticulating, but before I could say anything but "Order! Order!" two of the attendants had seized the lady and conducted her outside the Chamber. It appeared that she was a Mrs. Travers Symonds, who was, or had been, private secretary to Mr. Keir Hardie, and in that capacity had obtained access to the Members' lobby. She had engaged one of the doorkeepers in conversation, had made a sudden dart under his arm, and burst into the Chamber. Her name was, of course, placed upon the black list, and she was for a year or two denied admission to the precincts. Subsequently she wrote me an apology and an undertaking not to offend again, and the embargo upon her was removed.

Another incident which marked the beginning of the autumn Session was the suspension of Mr. Victor Grayson. He was the first Socialist Member to be elected as a Socialist to the House. On the day following Mrs. Symonds' escapade, he had insisted upon

endeavouring to raise the question of unemployment, although we were then working at the Licensing Bill under a guillotine order, which forbade the discussion of any other topic on a day allotted to that Bill. As Mr. Grayson insisted, notwithstanding my remonstrances, in continuing to speak, I had to order him to withdraw, and on his declining to do so, he was removed by the Sergeant-at-Arms. On the following day, when the House was in committee, he repeated his offence, and on this occasion he was suspended from the service of the House for the remainder of the Session.

But we were not to be left in peace, for on the 28th of October whilst we were discussing the Licensing Bill a commotion occurred in the Ladies' Gallery, placards of "Votes for Women" were hung out, and some women chained themselves to the grille. At the same time a man threw masses of leaflets into the House from the Strangers' Gallery. The latter was promptly and easily removed, but not so the ladies, for it was found impossible to remove them without removing the grille, and this could not be done until the House had risen. The result of these demonstrations was that I felt compelled to close the public galleries altogether for the remainder of the Session; consequently, until the House rose, we had no spectators, male or female, of our proceedings except such persons as were provided with passes to the Ambassadors' and Special Gallery. A select committee was set up to enquire into the general system of admission to the public galleries. I appeared as a witness before it, and strongly urged, notwithstanding the views of Sir David Erskine, the Sergeant-at-Arms, that the galleries should after a certain hour be free and open to the public; every stranger, however, should, before admission, sign a promise that he would

comply with the regulations and not create any disturbance. Up to this period no stranger could obtain admission except through a Member, and this was supposed to be some sort of guarantee for his good behaviour, but as in nine cases out of ten the Member was totally unacquainted with the stranger whom he introduced, it was obvious that the so-called guarantee was entirely illusory. My suggestion was adopted by the committee and has worked well. Members have been to a great extent saved the trouble of being called out of the House in order to obtain seats for persons representing themselves to be constituents, and although there have been one or two cases of strangers violating their written undertaking and misbehaving themselves, some hundreds of thousands have visited the gallery without any untoward results.

Except for one very late sitting towards the end of the Session, we avoided late hours and got through a great deal of business. There was less friction between the Government and Opposition Whips, and since Mr. Asquith's accession to the Prime Ministership, the leaders were on terms of personal amity.

The Prorogation took place just before Christmas, and whilst the Government could place to its credit the Old Age Pensions, the Coal Mines, Eight Hours, the Port of London, the Irish University, the Protection of Children, and some other useful Acts, they had failed to carry into law either an Education or a Licensing Bill.

The former had been the subject-matter of much negotiation and attempted arrangement between Mr. Runciman and the Hierarchy of the Church, and the latter had been strenuously debated for many weeks and closured by compartments, but failed to pass the Lords.

One of its strongest opponents in the Commons was Mr. Bottomley, who was at that time not only a very popular but also a very able speaker. Although returned as a Liberal and a supporter of the Liberal Government, he was a free lance, and was thus able to castigate or ridicule all parties alike, and of this he took full advantage. He always spoke from the corner seat just above the bar on the Government side; turning his back upon the Strangers' Gallery, he faced my chair, and thus had the whole House in front of him. He had a curious habit of swaying from one side to the other, like a horse that "weaves," did not raise his voice high, nor use much gesticulation, but made the sort of speeches which specially appealed to the House, full of humour, chaff and ridicule. I am told that about this period his reputation as a speaker was so well established, that he had no difficulty in filling the Albert Hall with an audience, himself being the chairman and the only speaker, and that at the conclusion he used to move a vote of thanks to himself for his speech and for his conduct in the chair, put the question and declare it unanimously carried.

The autumn season had been a very good one for sport, and I had consequently enjoyed a good deal of first-rate shooting and shared in the compilation of many heavy bags. At Broomhead our party, consisting of Mr. R. Rimington Wilson and his brother, Lord Onslow, Lord Balfour of Burleigh, Sir Savile Crossley, Mr. Barry, Colonel Sibthorp and myself, had got 880 brace of grouse on the 26th of August, and two days later over the same ground another 500 brace. At Longford Castle Lord Radnor and his party, consisting of Lord Cecil Manners, Mr. Sydney Holland (now Lord Knutsford), Major Wingfield, Mr. Ernest Chaplin, Mr. Marshall Brooks,

and myself, got 403 brace of partridges in one day—in those days a big bag, but since then frequently eclipsed. At Bishops Hall, Colonel Mark Lockwood's place near Epping Forest, we got 800 pheasants; at Sir Weetman Pearson's at Paddock Hurst, our bag was 600 pheasants, and at my father's at Campsea Ashe, we just exceeded the 1,000 with a party of seven guns.

Besides these shooting parties we paid some country house visits to Mr. J. F. Mason, M.P., at Eynsham near Oxford; to Lord James at Braemore, near Salisbury; to Lord Iveagh at Elveden, and, in the last week of the year, to Lord Powis at his ancient and picturesque home Powis Castle, near Welshpool, where the pheasants fly higher than at any other place known to me.

1909

Before the Session opened, my wife and I went for ten days to Château d'Oex, in Switzerland, a place which subsequently became well known to the British public as the spot on which, during the war, a number of British officers who had been captured were interned on parole. The purport of our visit was to take part in some of the winter sports, which have now become so popular with the British public and the Swiss hotel proprietors. There was no great bobsleigh run at Château d'Oex, but there was plenty of skating, curling and sleighing, and as we were fortunate in our weather, we much enjoyed our stay there.

The night before the opening of Parliament I dined with the Prime Minister, at his official dinner to the Members of his Government. Mr. Asquith introduced a slight change in the usual procedure by reading the King's speech to us before dinner instead of after, as is customary. A number of useful and important

measures were foreshadowed, but, as generally happens, the House was chiefly occupied during the Session with matters other than those indicated. This year the strength of the Navy and the Budget proposals occupied the greater part of the time of the House. Until Easter the usual routine business was put through, and the usual all-night sitting on the Army Annual Bill Committee took place.

The Suffragette disturbances still continued from time to time, and on one occasion some women who had obtained access to St. Stephen's Hall managed to chain themselves to two of the statues there, and between them succeeded in breaking off a portion of a statue, which, however, was easily replaced.

Notwithstanding these vagaries, the recommendations of the Select Committee, appointed in the previous Session to consider the regulations for the admission of strangers, having been adopted, the galleries, which had been closed to the public since the previous October, were reopened and the male public was readmitted under strict conditions. On the 10th of May I opened the Ladies' Gallery to the relatives of Members, who made themselves responsible for the good behaviour of their kith and kin.

Ten days after the Easter recess the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Lloyd George, opened the famous "People's Budget," as it was dubbed, in a speech of five hours. As this took place in committee of the whole House, I was not present and did not hear him, but it was a great effort, and must have taxed his powers of concentration and exposition very severely. In the middle of his speech he obtained leave to break off for half an hour for rest and refreshment. This is the only occasion that I can recall of such an interval being

asked for or granted. Five-hour speeches have been previously delivered; Lord Palmerston was guilty of one on the Don Pacifico incident, but I am not aware whether it was a continuous effort or in two or more sections. The longest speech that I can remember was made by Mr. Galloway, M.P. for a Manchester division, in opposition to a Bill on musical copyright. I think it lasted three hours; but in that case time was "of the essence" of the effort, as its purpose was to delay the second reading of a Bill on a private Members' day. The Budget, which was not inaptly described as "six budgets rolled into one," was hotly contested and occupied a vast deal of time. The evening after its introduction I happened to meet the Chancellor of the Exchequer at the Royal Academy banquet. He asked me how long I thought it would take to get the Budget through, and my reply was that if he persisted in the valuation clauses it would probably take until Christmas, but that if they were dropped, not much more than the normal period. My forecast was not far out, for Parliament sat continuously this year until the 3rd of December.

An incident which has been frequently referred to, but which I did not myself witness, occurred during the delivery of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's speech. When he reached the point of explaining the increases of the Death Duties which he proposed to impose upon estates aggregating to £1,000,000 or more, Sir Herbert Raphael suddenly arose from his seat and stumped out hurriedly, as if the announcement had been more than he could bear. He was generally supposed to be a millionaire. On this occasion, however, it was not resentment at the increased taxation, but the sudden recollection of an engagement which caused

his hasty withdrawal. When Sir Herbert had first entered the House I had, when I had occasion to call out his name, pronounced it like the celebrated artist's, Raaphaael, with a broad "a," but he came to me one day and explained that he claimed no relationship with the artist and preferred to be called Rayphayel, a desire to which of course I acceded.

Another story is told of him as follows: Soon after the war began in 1914, he joined the Army as a private. After a while his commanding officer sent for him, and complimenting him upon his ability and intelligence, proposed to obtain for him a commission, but this he declined on the ground that he did not care much about the officers of his battalion and preferred the society of the rank and file. At that time he was Mr. Raphael and was not made a baronet until 1921.

As most of the discussions were in committee, from the chair of which the Speaker is absent, I had a very dull and dreary time. I could not take a holiday, as I had to attend daily for an hour or two at the commencement of the day's proceedings, and I had to remain in my library, or within the precincts of the House, in case at any moment the Budget discussion were to be adjourned and other work taken, or in case some incident should occur which might demand my immediate attendance. The House frequently sat all night, or until a very advanced hour, all through the summer months, and until the 5th of November, when the Finance Bill, whose original 78 clauses had now been expanded to 98, went up to the Lords. There had been a brief breathing space of ten days in October between the committee and report stages of the Bill, and on one or two occasions the Chairman of Ways and Means sat for me as Deputy Speaker and enabled me to go home.

Cumberland being a long way off, a regular week-end at home was not easily achieved.

During this very prolonged Session both the Government and Opposition supporters worked in relays, leave of absence being granted to them by the "Whips" if they could find pairs, so that all through August, September and October each side was about fifty short of its full numbers, the absent fifty snatching a brief holiday of a week or a fortnight, and returning to relieve their colleagues. On one occasion, the only occasion which I can recall of such an incident, my chaplain, Canon Wilberforce, was absent and was unable to find a substitute, leaving to me the duty of reading prayers at the beginning of the sitting.

At one point in the discussions they were interrupted in order to pass a Standing Order, giving to the Chairman of Committee and his Deputy the power of selecting amendments for discussion and passing over such as he considered trivial or unimportant. This form of closure was very appropriately nick-named "the Kangaroo."

During the earlier part of the Session my wife and I had the pleasure of receiving at the Speaker's House a number of distinguished visitors. The Prince and Princess of Wales honoured us with their presence at dinner, and we asked several M.P.'s of different shades of politics to meet them. Later on, several delegates of the Russian Duma, including MM. Homiakoff, Miliukoff and Guchkoff, who were on a visit to England, came to tea, and we had a large party to meet them. An amusing incident occurred in the course of the proceedings. My wife, not knowing Mr. McKinnon Wood (who was one of our guests) by sight, and mistaking him for one of the Russian delegates, introduced him

to Mrs. Austen Chamberlain, explaining that she was "la femme du ministre de finances dans la dernière Duma," meaning the last English Parliament. Neither Mr. McKinnon Wood nor Mrs. Austen Chamberlain knew each other by sight, and each thinking the other was a Russian, carried on a conversation in French, until some chance expression revealed to both the mistake under which they laboured.

There was another amusing story about the Duma, to the effect that a gentleman, better acquainted with operatic than political matters, having been invited to meet the Russian Duma, replied, "Yes, with great pleasure. Do you think she would come to supper afterwards?"

A month later a number of Turkish delegates from the newly-constituted Turkish Parliament were on a visit to England, and came to luncheon. The party included Talaat Bey, Djavid Bey and Enver Pasha, who subsequently became notorious for their violence and hostility to Great Britain. At this time, however, they were on the most friendly terms with our countrymen, to whom they attributed in large measure the establishment of their new constitution in Turkey and the creation of their Parliament. My brother, Sir Gerard Lowther, was at this period the British Ambassador in Constantinople, and on his arrival in that capital, the previous autumn, had received a great ovation. My brother, however, who had, at an earlier period of his career, had considerable experience of Turkish politics and politicians, was always sceptical about the honesty and capacity of the Young Turks, and, I imagine, frequently warned our Foreign Office of their untrustworthiness.

Other visitors to London during this summer were

a number of gentlemen representing the Colonial Press. Their assemblage went by the name of the Imperial Press Conference, and on the 7th of June they were entertained at a luncheon in the Harcourt room on the terrace of the House of Commons, at which I took the chair, and on behalf of the House, offered them a hearty welcome. They were also invited to attend a big naval review at Spithead, of the Home and Atlantic Fleets. I was also a guest on the *Enchantress*, and had an interesting conversation with Sir John Fisher, then First Sea Lord. I remember his prophesying that before long the only really valuable men-of-war would be submersibles, and that the time would come when even the largest ships afloat would have to be submersible as a protection against attack. As I was very interested in the submarine, and in the exercises which some of them had been carrying out at the review, I obtained the authority of Mr. McKenna (then First Lord of the Admiralty) and of Sir John Fisher, to go out to sea in one of these new and strange craft. Accordingly, on the 10th of June, I motored down to Felixstowe Dock and went on board the C.1 submarine, under the command of Commander Napier, with two other officers on board.

We proceeded to sea, rounding Landguard fort and passing Felixstowe on the port side. I was then shown how the water-tanks were gradually filled until the craft became easily submersible. We then sank about five fathoms, and after some twenty minutes' progress, rose until the conning pillar was just above the sea level. Perceiving a ship approaching, we dived and advanced towards her, coming up from time to time to take a view through the conning pillar. We were accompanied by a torpedo boat, which kept not far

off, according to Admiralty instructions. There had been a few cases of accidents and mishaps to submarines, and this was the reason for this precautionary order. I do not know how the case may be now, but the submarines of those days were driven when on the surface by a 16-cylinder petrol engine, which was extremely noisy; when travelling under water, however, the engine employed was an electric engine and quite silent, so that the words of command were easily audible. The interior of the craft struck me as an extremely uncomfortable spot to live in, very confined, a mass of pipes, tubes, levers, valves, handles, gauges. It made me realize more than ever the justice of Dr. Johnson's definition of a ship as "a prison with the chance of being drowned." After some two or three hours at sea, I returned to Felixstowe Dock, much interested and delighted with my original and novel experiences. A week or so later a number of submarines were moored in the Thames, just off the terrace of the House of Commons, and immediately opposite the windows of my library. Members were given an opportunity of going on board, and availed themselves of it in large numbers. At low tide these craft lay on the mud, and, almost their whole hulls being visible, presented a strange appearance to the landsman's untutored eye.

At Whitsuntide this year I made a trip to the Scilly Isles. My wife and daughter were at that time on a visit to my brother in Constantinople. I drove myself down in my little De Dion car to Penzance, and crossed to Tresco, which we reached in about three hours in the good ship *City of Lyonesse*. Captain Dorrien Smith kindly sent his little launch to meet the ship and take me off, and I spent a most enjoyable time as his guest at Tresco Abbey. The mass of sub-tropical trees,

shrubs and flowers which grew there was a revelation. Tree ferns, Metrosideros, Sparmannias, Farkoias, Echiums, Mezembryanthemums, and countless other half hardy plants in great profusion, struggled with each other for mastery. My host pointed out to me how vigorous was the growth of the ordinary geranium, which had struggled with and overmastered the wild bracken. My visit was too late in the year for me to see the fields and fields of Narcissus, which are grown for the London market, but the fences of pink Escallonia, which divide these fields, were in bloom and looked both strange and lovely. With gardening, my host, commonly known as "the King" (of the Scilly Isles), combined sea-fishing, and every afternoon we went out in *Puffing Billy*, either to take up the lines, on which it was always a lottery what we should find, or to visit the capital town, St. Mary's, or Puffin Island, or some other of the islands which form the group of the Scillies. Puffin Island is uninhabited, but the sea-birds have made it their home and breeding-place, and there tens of thousands of puffins, gulls and shearwaters have made their nests on or below the ground. As you walk about it requires caution to avoid stepping on a nest. The birds have no fear of man and will hardly move out of the way; in fact, to use the words of Alexander Selkirk:

> The beasts that roam over the plain
> My form with indifference see,
> They are so unacquainted with man,
> Their tameness is shocking to me.

On the 3rd of July the King paid a visit to Rugby School, to open the fine school hall recently erected there. He stayed for the week-end with Mr. and Mrs. Arthur James at Coton, and the party for the occasion



GROUP AT COTON HOUSE, RUGBY, 1900

included the American Ambassador and Mrs. Whitelaw Reid, Lord and Lady Leicester, Lord Durham, the Duke of Richmond, Lady Savile, Mrs. G. Keppel, and myself.

An amusing episode occurred on the Sunday. We had all been to church and the men wore frock coats. On our return to the house we found a photographer anxious to take a group of the party in the garden. His Majesty sent for a hat, and a soft Homburg hat was brought to him. We followed suit, and discarding our top hats, appeared, like the King, in frock coats and soft felt hats. When the photograph of the group was published in one of the picture papers, it was headed "The King sets a new fashion," and the letterpress accompanying the picture descanted on the novelty of the attire and the certainty that it would be immediately adopted by society in general as the correct costume for ceremonial occasions. Needless to say that this prophecy was not fulfilled.

I was much amused one day this summer to read a translation of a German account of our Parliament, in which the writer explained that the chief reason for the quiet tone of the debate in the House of Commons is to avoid awaking the Speaker from his slumbers in the chair. As a matter of fact, during the whole period of my tenure of that office, as well as during the ten years that I was Chairman of Ways and Means, I cannot recall that I ever had forty winks, although there was every temptation to do so, for the glare of the lights in the glass ceiling was, for the Speaker, averted by the canopy over his chair. Before I had that protection I introduced for use "at the table" green blotting-paper, with which I covered any books or papers which might reflect light in a disagreeable or harmful way.

This green blotting-paper has now become popular.

At the conclusion of the brief recess of ten days, the House met again for the consideration of the report stage of the Finance Bill, which, however, did not take more than ten days to complete.

About this time a disagreeable incident took place between Mr. Ure, the Lord Advocate, and Mr. Balfour. The former had used some expressions which were interpreted to mean that if and when the Conservative Party returned to office, it would discontinue the grant of Old Age Pensions. Mr. Balfour and the Conservative Party were very indignant at this suggestion and Mr. Balfour stigmatized the charge as "a frigid and calculated lie." This led to a heated scene in the House, and much recrimination outside. Mr. Ure explained that he was referring to the impossibility of financing Old Age Pensions on a system of Tariff Reform, but the Opposition were not pacified, and for a time Mr. Ure, who had hitherto been a popular member of the Ministry, was the target for many missiles, some of which were in the shape of squibs and jokes turning upon his name. One of them which I happen to remember was the translation of "Magna est veritas et prævalebit," which was rendered "Great is truth and it will end Ure."

The third reading of the Finance Bill passed on the 3rd of November by a large majority, the Irish Party, who had opposed the Bill throughout, abstaining, however, from voting. During the interval which followed, there was naturally much speculation as to the course which the Lords would take. Their right as well as their wisdom in venturing to reject a finance Bill, was universally discussed and widely disputed; but all doubts were resolved when on the 30th of November the Bill

was rejected by them by a large majority. The Prime Minister at once moved a motion in the Commons denouncing their action as unconstitutional, and it was carried by the usual Government majority. An Irish Land Bill and a Housing and Town Planning Bill went through with some amendments, and Parliament was prorogued on the 3rd of December, never to meet again.

It was obvious that the only solution of the question was to be obtained by referring the matter to the decision of the constituencies, and a General Election was soon announced to take place on the 10th of January.

Before the end of the year I paid a visit to Lord Curzon at his stately home at Hackwood, near Basingstoke, for some shooting, and to the Londonderrys at Wynyard; but the rest of my time was spent at home at Hutton John, where deep snow gave us many opportunities of sleighing.

Just before the final days of the Session my predecessor in the Speaker's chair, Lord Selby, died at the age of seventy-four. Notwithstanding failing health, he had done a considerable amount of public work during the last four years, particularly as Chairman of the Royal Commissions on Vaccination and on Motor Cars. He was not, however, spared long enough to complete the former important investigation. I had known Lord Selby for twenty-five years, first at the Bar, then as Member for Carlisle, and subsequently I had served for ten years under him as Deputy Speaker, and was always on the best of terms with him. His friendliness and amiability in private were only equalled by his courtesy and dignity in public. I do not think that he was ever very happy in the Speaker's chair. When he was elected to the office the work was new to

him, he had never made any particular study of the rules or precedents, and although his natural abilities and painstaking application to the solution of the problems which confronted him enabled him to master his difficulties, he never seemed quite at ease; nor did he convey to the House the feeling that he had complete control of the situation, a feeling which begets confidence and allays opposition. He would have made an excellent judge and adorned the Court of Appeal.

CHAPTER XXI

1910-1911

Madrid—Political Parties after the Election—Constantinople—Death of King Edward—Effect on Politics—Conference of Leaders—Another Dissolution—Mr. Ginnell's Attack on me.

1910

The month of January was mostly occupied by the oratorical campaign which precedes the polls and by the holding of the elections in the constituencies. I was spared the labour of a contested election, which in the other constituencies turned upon the question of the rejection of the Budget, the alternative to the Government proposals, viz. Tariff Reform, the strength of the Navy, the future of the House of Lords, and the nastiness of black bread as an article of diet. This last topic had been introduced as an illustration of what the country might have to swallow if it adopted the Tariff Reform proposals of the Opposition. It gave me a malicious satisfaction to see the black rye bread, which was served at my official dinner to the Government at the beginning of the next Session, not only not declined but evidently enjoyed.

On the 15th of January I was proposed as Member for Mid-Cumberland by my old friend Mr. Henry C. Howard of Greystoke, and seconded by another old friend, Mr. Hamlet Riley. There being no other candidate, I was duly elected, and on the following day my wife and daughter and I left for Madrid *en route* to Algeçiras.

At Madrid we stayed at the Embassy with our old friends, Sir Maurice and Lady de Bunsen, and renewed our acquaintance with the pictures, infinitely better housed and shown than formerly; and we also visited the spot where the bomb was thrown at the King and Queen of Spain on their return from their wedding ceremony and killed twenty-three people. This place had a peculiar interest for me, as my brother, Cecil, who was at that time Military Attaché in Madrid, had been present, and had been, with Sir M. de Bunsen, the first to rush to the royal carriage, hand the Queen down out of her coach and stand by until she was able to enter the *coche di respetto*, the empty coach which accompanied the procession in case of necessity.

My brother appeared to be destined to assist royal personages in distress, for when His Majesty King George had a fall from his horse at the front during the war, and was in severe pain from the accident, it was my brother who picked him up and carried him to a motor car near by.

I also went with the Ambassador to see the game of *pelota*, something like the game of "fives" but on a large scale, played in a long court to an accompaniment of shouting from bookmakers which was deafening, and, to my mind, marred the entertainment.

There was a dinner to the King and Queen of Spain at the Embassy, followed by a ball, which was a brilliant function and attended by all the smart society of Madrid as well as the staff of the Embassy. Besides the King and Queen, the guests at dinner included the Duchess of San Carlos, the Duque de Arden, the Marquis de la Torrecilla, Princess Pio, Señor de Perez Caballane, Countess de Casa Valencia, and the Señora de Alcala Galicas, well-known figures in Spanish society. The

general harmony of the proceedings was marred by a mysterious incident. In anticipation of the *cotillon* the Ambassador had provided some presents to be presented during the dance to the King and Queen, but alas! when the moment came, the presents had disappeared. Into whose pockets they had been transferred was never, I think, discovered.

At Madrid we renewed our acquaintance with Señor Osma, who had been educated at Cambridge, and, entering political life in Spain, had at one time been Minister of Finance. From Madrid we went to Algeçiras, staying for a night at that picturesque spot, Ronda. We spent some little time at Algeçiras, which, however, does not in itself provide many attractions. However, we made several excursions from there to Gibraltar to luncheon with the Governor; to Ronda with Mr. James Livesey, the contractor who had built the line from Ronda to Algeçiras; to Tarifa with M. Ernesto de Larios, the Master of the Calpe Hounds, and to Tangier, where we stayed for a night or two. Sir Reginald Lister was our Minister there, and took us to call on the Governor, and to visit Menebhi, a very enlightened and Anglophil Moorish potentate, whose house commanded a splendid view of the Straits. Menebhi entertained us with mint tea, a favourite Moorish beverage, but excessively sweet; and presented my wife with a handsome leather waistband of Moorish design. At dinner at the Legation we met Mr. and Mrs. Lavery, who then had a house in Tangier, and the German Minister, Herr Rosen, who after the war became for a time Minister of Foreign Affairs in Berlin. Madame Rosen was an accomplished pianiste, and after dinner treated us to some delightful music.

From Algeçiras we went to stay with Mr. Mostyn

at Molino del Rey, not far from Granada. He was the agent in charge of the Duke of Wellington's estate on the Veja below Granada, which we visited on two or three occasions, and from which we enjoyed a magnificent view of the Sierra Nevada above and of the vast plains below.

Leaving my wife and daughter at Torre del Molino, I came straight back to London, getting across Paris with some difficulty, owing to the floods there; and arrived in time for the first meeting of the House of Commons on the 15th of February. Mr. Burt, who was then the Father of the House, proposed me as Speaker, in a very kindly and sympathetic speech, and my seconder was Mr. H. Chaplin, an old friend of the family and quite the last of the exponents of the old-time style of oratory. I was again unanimously elected and conducted to the Chair with the usual ceremony. Three days later I had the honour of being invited to meet King Edward at dinner at Sir Archibald and Lady Edmonstone's house. The other guests included Count Mensdorff, the Austrian Ambassador, the Marquise d'Hautpool, Lord and Lady Farquhar, Mr. and Mrs. H. Higgins, Mrs. George Keppel, Lady Savile and Lady Johnson. I did not think that His Majesty was looking very well, and not long afterwards he left for Biarritz, a journey which was destined to be his last trip abroad.

The General Election had resulted in a considerable loss to the Liberal Party and gain to the Conservatives. The Liberals, who had numbered 373 in the last Parliament, returned 274 in number. The Conservatives increased their forces from 167 to 272. The other parties remained about the same, except that the Nationalists were now divided. Mr. Redmond had a

following of 70 Irish Members, but Mr. W. O'Brien and Mr. Healy, with their adherents, numbered about a dozen.

If the General Election was to be considered as the verdict of the country on the action of the Lords in rejecting the Finance Bill, the majority of Members returned was against the Bill and in favour of its rejection, for up to the time of the election the Irish Party had been opposed to the Bill. The Conservatives and the Irish mustered 354, whilst the Liberal and Labour Parties combined could only number 315. But it was soon evident that the Irish Party were not likely to join forces with the Conservatives. Their eyes were fixed on a Home Rule Bill, and in order to obtain their object it was necessary for them by hook or crook to get rid of the Lords' veto. This was, therefore, the crux which dominated the whole situation during the earlier part of the Session, with the additional complication that many of the Liberal Party, whilst prepared to abolish the veto of the House of Lords, felt that a reform of the Second Chamber was even more important than the abolition of its power of veto.

Some days were occupied in swearing in the elected Members, and amongst those who took the oath was Mr. Joseph Chamberlain; but it was with some difficulty that he was able to attend. His health had been failing for some months; he was so feeble that he could not sign his own name on the roll. He acknowledged the signature, written for him by Mr. Austen Chamberlain, and I came down from the Chair to the front bench in order to welcome the veteran statesman and shake him by the hand. This was the last time I ever saw him.

The King's Speech was short and referred to the

differences between the two Houses and the steps proposed to alter the existing relations between them; and before the Easter recess, the Prime Minister's three resolutions, viz. that the House of Lords could not reject a money Bill, that any Bill passing the House of Commons in three consecutive Sessions should become law, and that the duration of Parliament should be limited to five years, were introduced.

The recess was of very short duration, only four days, and on Easter Tuesday the discussion on the resolutions began. This with its sequelæ was one of the most interesting series of debates which it was ever my good fortune to hear. The form in which the question was first proposed was that the House should resolve itself into committee in order to consider the resolutions, and the debate therefore ranged over the whole matter. Mr. Asquith, Mr. Balfour, Mr. Redmond, Mr. Cave, Mr. F. E. Smith, Lord Hugh Cecil, Mr. Birrell, Mr. Gibson Bowles, Mr. Bonar Law, and Mr. Lloyd George, all spoke, and all spoke well. There was a good attendance throughout the four nights' debate, and the House was deeply interested. Eventually, after closure had been applied, the motion to go into committee was carried by a majority of 107.

Before the discussion was resumed on the separate resolutions, Mr. Asquith had, in reply to a question about what changes were proposed in the new Finance Bill, made use of the expression "Wait and see," an oracular phrase which caught the public ear, and in subsequent years was repeated almost *ad nauseam*. I am afraid that I must plead guilty to having used it myself when in difficulties to find a reply.

The resolutions themselves, for which a guillotine time table was adopted, were taken in committee, and

I did not therefore hear the debates upon them. The report stage, by arrangement between the parties, gave rise to no debate, and after a division on each resolution, in which the Government majorities remained at about 100, the Parliament Bill, founded upon them, was introduced. On the motion for the adjournment of the House at the close of the sitting, there was a short but excited debate, Mr. Asquith announcing that, in the event of the Lords declining to adopt the Parliament Bill, the Government would advise the Crown to take such steps as might be necessary to ensure that the will of the Commons should prevail, and Mr. Balfour denouncing this programme as a surrender of the dignity of the Prime Minister's office in return for the purchase of the Irish vote.

The rest of the time before the Whitsun recess was occupied in passing under guillotine and without much difficulty, but with some slight alterations, the old Finance Bill of the previous Session.

Before the recess an event had occurred—the death of Mr. Tompkinson—which cast a gloom over many Members of the House, to whom he was well known, and with whom he was extremely popular. The House of Commons point to point races, which were combined with those of the Pegasus Club, an institution of the Bar, were held in the neighbourhood of Epping Forest. Mr. Justice Grantham and I acted as judges at the meeting, but had no points of order or of law to decide. Five races were run. The light-weights race was won by Mr. Hall Walker and the heavy-weights race by Mr. George Lane Fox. In the latter race, at the last fence but one, Mr. Tompkinson fell and received such severe injuries that he eventually, after lingering for some days, succumbed to the accident. He was a gallant

sportsman, an old Member of the House, a good though not a frequent speaker, a moderate Liberal in politics, and universally esteemed and respected.

As soon as the House rose on the 29th of April, I left for Constantinople on a visit to my brother, Sir Gerard Lowther. On arrival I was welcomed by a deputation from the new Turkish Parliament, headed by Biskrani Pasha, Minister of the Interior. During my stay I visited the Senate and the Chamber, but as the debates naturally took place in Turkish, I, equally naturally, did not understand a word. I made the acquaintance of the President of the Senate, a very old gentleman, Said Pasha, who seemed to be overwhelmed with his new and unaccustomed duties, and of the President of the Chamber, Ahmed Riza, a good-looking, intelligent man, with whom I had much conversation upon the rules adopted by his Chamber, one of which in particular struck me as being peculiar and probably unworkable, viz. the necessity of having a quorum of at least two-thirds of the Members present before any business could be entered upon. The President seemed greatly surprised when I informed him that out of our House of some 600 Members, it only required 40 to be present to make a quorum, and he explained that the Turks would never empower so small a number to do business, as they could not trust each other sufficiently, though he admitted that their system often resulted in a great loss of time through the absence of the requisite number.

I visited the ex-Sultan's rooms in Yildiz Kiosk, and was struck by their small size and mean appearance. I was informed that he had always been in terror of an attempt on his life, that he always had some loaded weapons within reach of his hand, and that on one

occasion, being suddenly approached in his garden by a man whom he did not recognize, he shot him. The unfortunate victim turned out to be one of his gardeners.

With my brother and sister-in-law I visited all the chief sights of this wonderful city, some picturesque, some gorgeous, many historical and many squalid. My brother had planned a trip in the Embassy yacht, or *stationaire*, as it was called, to the port of Brussa and a short excursion into Asia Minor, but the weather was unpropitious, and before we were able to carry it out we received the sad and unexpected news of the death of King Edward, which involved my immediate return to London.

The notorious Talaat Bey and several of the Turkish M.P.'s came to the station to bid me farewell. In passing through Sofia Sir M. Findlay, our Minister, came to the station to see me, and told me of the difficulty which he had experienced in persuading Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria to accept the invitation to attend King Edward's funeral in London. It seemed that Prince Ferdinand bore some grudge against King Edward for some supposed slight, and at first declined the invitation; but on Sir M. Findlay pointing out that most of the reigning Sovereigns of Europe would be present and that the Prince's absence would give occasion for observation, he relented and accepted the invitation.

On my return to London I found a city of mourning and general gloom. Everybody seemed to have lost a personal friend. The death of the King had been so unexpected, his brief reign had been marked by a general advance towards pacific relations with all foreign countries, he had become so universally popular that his loss was felt as a serious blow to the continu-

ance of our peaceful relations abroad and to the possibility of arriving at an amicable solution of the serious differences which were threatening us at home.

The last time that I had seen His Majesty was on the 28th of April, a week before he died, at the Opera, when I met him as he was leaving Covent Garden after a performance of "Siegfried."

Before my return, Her Majesty Queen Alexandra had desired that I should visit Buckingham Palace to see the King lying in state, before the body was enclosed in the coffin, but owing to my absence abroad I was unable to obey the Queen's commands.

The House of Commons had met, according to custom, on the day after the King's death, but I was absent, and the Deputy Speaker, Mr. Emmott, was also away. Fortunately Sir Courtney Ilbert, the Clerk of the House, was available and in his place; but, in the absence of any person legally qualified to occupy the Chair, the House adjourned until Mr. Emmott could arrive on the day but one following. By the 17th of May, when the House met again, I was back in my place. We met at 11 o'clock, and moving off in fours, the Government and Privy Councillors following immediately after me, proceeded by the Members' stairs to Westminster Hall. The King's coffin was brought in by a detachment of Guards, and was placed on a catafalque in the centre of the Hall, guarded by some of the Grenadier Guards and surrounded by tall candlesticks with flickering lights, the Royal insignia being placed on the coffin. The Lord Chancellor and the Peers occupied the other side of the Hall, whilst King George and the Queen and Queen Alexandra, with the Dowager Empress of Russia and other royal visitors and attendants, stood at the foot. The Archbishop of Canterbury conducted a short

service, and we then withdrew. Later in the day the public was admitted to the lying in state, and during that afternoon and on the following days a vast stream of people, estimated at 10,000 per hour, poured down the steps from the south end of the Hall, and, dividing at the foot, passed by on either side of the coffin and out by the big doors into Palace Yard. It was a most impressive sight to see this endless stream, like a mighty river, coming down and slowly and reverently passing along, taking a last farewell of the King whom they had honoured and loved. The gloom of the ancient and historic place, the immobility of the gentlemen-at-arms and of the Indian officer and soldiers, who stood with bowed heads and reversed arms in guard around the coffin, made an ineffaceable impression.

On the 20th of May the coffin was removed and, followed by a procession of reigning Sovereigns and Princes, passed through London on its way to its last resting-place at Windsor. The sight of the King's charger, with empty saddle, and the King's favourite terrier, "Cæsar," led along behind the gun-carriage bearing the coffin, was a sight which those who saw would not readily forget.

I saw the procession start from Westminster and then proceeded in full uniform to Windsor. The place allotted to me was in the nave and my neighbour was the Lord Mayor of Cork. I subsequently protested to the Earl Marshal that the representative of the Commons should have been assigned a more important place at such an important State function, a protest which bore fruit on a subsequent similar occasion.

The effect of the King's death upon the political world was to allay for a time the storm which was brewing. It was almost universally felt that a bitter

and acrimonious wrangle between the two Houses of the Legislature and between the several political parties in the State following immediately upon the great national loss, would be improper and unseemly, and that it was only fair to the new King to give him time to get into the saddle before calling upon him to take some decisive line which might be necessary if the crisis became acute. It was therefore arranged between the parties that a Conference between them should take place, and for this purpose four from each side were selected to arrive, if possible, at an amicable settlement of the difficulties of the situation. The moderates on either side favoured this development, but it was regarded with much suspicion and dislike by the extremists of both parties. The Conference soon got to work and continued their sittings during the summer and all through the autumn, but their proceedings were enveloped in such secrecy that the public were never informed whether agreement was ever reached on any question, or on which particular issues the Conference broke down. It was generally believed that the Home Rule question had occupied a good deal of attention and had proved a stumbling-block in the way of an amicable settlement. Be that as it may, the effect of the Conference on the House of Commons was to remove for a time the principal subject-matter of discussion, and the House occupied itself with the measures made necessary by the new reign. A Regency Bill, a Bill amending the form of the King's Declaration, and the Civil List, took up the time of the House until the adjournment on the 3rd of August.

On the report stage of the Regency Bill I had the duty of giving a casting vote, the only occasion during my tenure of the Speakership when this occurred. Mr.

Mitchell Thompson had moved the insertion of an amendment, the effect of which was to prohibit the Regent from giving assent to any Bill for repealing the Act of Parliament which secures the establishment of the Church in Scotland. This was opposed by the Government, and on a division the numbers announced were equal, 61 on either side. I gave my casting vote against the amendment on the ground that the amendment altered the terms of the Bill as introduced, and as approved by the House on second reading and in committee, and that I felt bound to support the previous decisions of the House.

During the summer I received the honorary degree of LL.D. from the University of Leeds, whose Chancellor was the Duke of Devonshire; my wife and I stayed with him at Chatsworth after the ceremony. Amongst others who also received this honour were the Prime Minister, Lord Lansdowne, Lord Crewe, Lord Rayleigh, and Sir W. Nicholson.

A few days later the same honour was conferred upon me by my old University of Cambridge, and amongst those who were also "doctored" on this occasion were Chief Baron Palles, Lord Selborne, Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir Walter Parratt, and Seyed Ameer Ali. I stayed with the Master of Trinity, Dr. Butler, and in the evening dined in Pembroke with my former instructor, Canon A. J. Mason, who was Master of the College and Vice-Chancellor that year.

Soon after this I met with an untoward accident which had also a humorous side to it. I had been bicycling round Battersea Park before breakfast, a form of exercise in which I occasionally indulged, and on passing near Lambeth Bridge on my return, I unfortunately collided with a gentleman who was crossing

the road, and from his garb was evidently a dignitary of the Church. I was precipitated on to the road and damaged my knee. I am afraid my language was not strictly Parliamentary in blaming the Church dignitary for the mishap. He, however, picked me up, dusted me down, and, seeing that I was able to again mount my bicycle, said, "You're all right, my man, you had better get on home." I was not all right, however, for on getting home my knee gave me a good deal of pain, and eventually an attack of gout developed which kept me in bed for some days. I did not discover for some time who was the dignitary with whom I had been in collision; but the truth came out, when a year or two later Sir David Erskine, the Sergeant-at-Arms, was telling the anecdote to the Archbishop of York, who was his guest in Scotland. As Sir David narrated his little story, the Archbishop gradually remembered the incident and finally confessed that he was the Church dignitary who had been the cause of my downfall. At that time I did not know the Archbishop by sight and he did not know me. We met subsequently and after mutual explanations the incident was closed.

During this summer I gave a sitting or two to Mr. Solomon J. Solomon, who had been commissioned by Lord Swaythling to paint a large picture for the House of Commons of an event in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, when the Queen was petitioned by her faithful Commons to choose a consort and continue the dynasty. The picture represents the Queen addressing the Commons, headed by Speaker Gargrave, and informing them that she, having been recently wedded to the State (witness the ring on her finger), was in no need of seeking any other husband, and that "as for children, are you not all my children?" Mr. Solomon was searching for

bearded models of an Elizabethan type, and amongst others selected me. I accordingly appear in the picture as her sword-bearer. Amongst others represented are Lord Swaythling himself, Mr. John Burns, Sir Courtenay Ilbert and Mr. L. Harcourt. As, however, the last-named did not wear a beard, only the upper half of his face appears in the picture. The picture is placed on the staircase, leading up from the central hall to the gallery in which the Committee rooms are situate.

As I am on the subject of pictures, I may mention that my friend Mr. Gery Cullum gave me a picture of Speaker Gargrave, which I, in turn, presented to the collection of Speakers' portraits now hanging in the Speaker's House; and that I also figure in the large picture in St. Stephen's Hall, painted by Mr. Salisbury, which represents the burial of the "Unknown Warrior" in Westminster Abbey.

During the autumn we paid several visits to Bolton Abbey, to Allenheads (Lord Allendale's shooting box near Hexham, Northumberland), to Mr. Rimington Wilson at Broomhead, to the Londonderrys at Wynyard, to Mr. and Mrs. Arthur James at Glenquoich for some deer-stalking, to Lord Northbrook's at Stratton, and to Lord Zetland's at Aske.

The failure of the Conference to arrive at any agreement was announced on the 10th of November, and a day or two later, when Parliament met again, the announcement was repeated and an immediate dissolution indicated. It was stated in making the announcement of failure that it was generally agreed that no useful purpose would be served by continuing the meetings of the Conference or by divulging any details of what had occurred.

The terms of the Parliament Bill were laid before the

House of Lords, in order that the country might know exactly, before the elections were held, of what the proposals for altering the relation of the two Houses consisted; but, as no opportunity was given for discussing the Bill at that time, the Opposition brought forward their suggestions for reconstituting the House of Lords in a series of resolutions moved by Lord Lansdowne.

The prorogation and dissolution took place on the 28th of November. An unusual incident took place in the Commons in the week immediately preceding. On Thursday, as the last item on the day's programme, stood a motion that the House at its rising should adjourn until the Monday following. It was thought that this motion would be accepted as a matter of course, and most Members left the House, probably for their constituencies; but unfortunately, Sir John D. Rees, who had not grasped the effect of his action, moved a count and was successful, so that the House had to meet again on the Friday. When the House met, as there were no effective orders of the day, and as there was no necessity for a motion of adjournment, there was no business to be transacted. We met at 12 o'clock and by nine minutes past 12 o'clock the House was up. This constituted the shortest sitting of the House on record.

I went down to Cumberland at once and made such preparations as were necessary for my re-election, which took place, as an unopposed return, on the 6th of December, and immediately afterwards returned to town in time to see my wife, my son Arthur, and my daughter off to Ceylon, where they went for the winter.

The General Election was over before Christmas, with the result that, although some seats were lost and some gained by all parties, the balance of votes in the House

was left almost precisely as before, the Liberals and Conservatives being equal, but the Government majority including as it did the Labour, Nationalist and Independent Nationalist Members, being 127.

At the end of this year I lost the services of my private secretary, Mr. Edward Gully, whom I had appointed to the position of Examiner of Private Bills, on the resignation of the former occupant of the post, Mr. Campion. Mr. Edward Gully had proved himself, during the five and a half years that he spent with me, an invaluable adjutant, well acquainted and deservedly popular with all the Members with whom he was in touch, and thoroughly *au fait* with the routine and traditions of the department of the Speaker. I was sorry to lose him, but pleased to think that in his new post I should still have the opportunity of continuing the friendship which we had formed and which time has only cemented.

He was replaced by Mr. Edward Cadogan, a younger son of Lord Cadogan, who in subsequent years gave me every assistance that a chief could hope to receive from his secretary, and was a most pleasant and agreeable co-adjutor, as well as an intimate friend.

1911

The House of Commons met on the last day of January for the election of the Speaker. I was proposed by Mr. Eugene Wason, the doyen of the Scottish Members, and the largest and tallest man in the House. My seconder was Lord Claud Hamilton, who, although first elected in 1865, had not achieved the distinction of being the "Father of the House," as there had been several gaps in his record of membership. He had, however, the secret of perpetual youth, and although at that time

sixty-eight years of age, was as slim and upright in figure as a man of thirty.

An unusual incident occurred after their two speeches had been made, for Mr. Ginnell arose and poured forth for half an hour a diatribe of criticism and abuse of myself, to the evident disgust of the House in general and to the discomfort of myself in particular. [illegible] ance was that, although he had repeatedly [illegible] debate, I had failed to call him, and that his name [illegible] not been submitted to me in the lists of speakers supp[illegible] to me by the Whips of his party. The truth was that he was a singularly unpopular personage and th[illegible] t[illegible] Irish Party did not regard his intervention in deb[illegible] as likely to be of any assistance to their cause. When Mr. Ginnell had finished, Mr. Redmond in a very handsome manner dissociated his party from his action, and I explained that there had been no discrimination in my mind against him, and that indeed he had received more latitude in the matter of asking supplementary questions than almost any other Member.

This incident had a disagreeable sequel, when a fortnight later Mr. Josiah Wedgwood and Mr. Ginnell were arraigned for a libel upon myself. Mr. Wedgwood had written a letter to Mr. Ginnell sympathizing with his statements and adding that they had the support of himself and other Liberal Members. Mr. Ginnell published the letter and it was brought to the notice of the House. Mr. Wedgwood offered an apology, which I at once accepted, but Mr. Ginnell was obdurate and repeated his charges. I explained that, particularly in a new Parliament, it was of great assistance to the Speaker to have at hand a list of those who proposed to take part in debate, as he might not know all of them by sight, but that these lists, prepared by the Whips,

were only used in full dress debates and were extremely useful in arranging the order of the speakers. Mr. Ginnell was censured by the House and suspended for seven days.

As soon as the Address had been disposed of, we began work on the Parliament Bill, which was submitted in the same form in which it had been presented to the Lords in the final days of the last session. The second reading, carried by a majority of 125 (the normal Government majority), followed soon after. During the course of the debate Mr. Balfour used the expression "was imposing upon the country constitutional changes by 'fraud.'" The use of this word led at once to an angry outburst of indignation, which might have developed into a prolonged uproar, had I not when appealed to calmed the turbid waters by suggesting that the use of the word, if applied to an individual, would be clearly disorderly, but might pass as ordinary polemical phraseology if applied to a party as a whole. The House smiled and (for a time) all was well.

The committee stage did not begin until after the Easter recess, which was unusually short. In the interval a few matters of personal interest to myself had occurred. Through the kindness of Mr. Arthur James and my cousin Mrs. James, who lived at Coton, near Rugby, I had kept two hunters during the season in their stables, and used to go down there for a hunt with the Pytchley every Saturday. On the 11th of March I took part in a great run from Badby Wood to Towcester which became memorable in the annals of a pack having already many great runs to its credit. I will not attempt to describe it, but merely record that from point to point it was 12 miles, and as hounds ran was estimated at eighteen. Time occupied was two and a

half hours. Very few of the field saw the whole of the run, my brother Harold being, however, one of the fortunate few. About half-way I took a wrong turn and lost the hunt.

I spent a very interesting week-end at Lord Rothschild's at Tring, examining his beautiful pictures, *objets d'art*, flowers, model farm and natural history museum. My host was full of stories, many of which related to Disraeli, of whom he was a great admirer. He also told me how, when Lord Hartington was staying at Althorp with Lord Spencer, the latter confided to him that he had been converted by Mr. Gladstone to Home Rule. Lord Hartington said nothing, but rose to leave the room. Lord Spencer, nettled at his silence and evident displeasure, seized a ball of worsted which happened to be on the table and hurled it at him, missing him, however, and breaking a valuable bit of china in the line of fire.

CHAPTER XXII

1911

Our Silver Wedding—The Parliament Bill—The Coronation—Angry Scenes in the Commons—Weakness of the Parliament Act—Death of Lord Onslow—Some Brookfield Stories—Rivière paints my Portrait.

The 1st of March was the twenty-fifth anniversary of our wedding-day, but as my wife was still abroad in Ceylon at the time, it was not celebrated until after her return. The House of Commons were kind enough to mark the occasion by presenting me with two very handsome silver salvers, and my wife with a diamond pendant. The presentation was made on the 3rd of May, just before the usual time for the meeting of the House. A small platform was erected in the Members' lobby. In the absence of the Prime Minister, in consequence of the recent death of his sister-in-law Lady Ribblesdale, Sir Edward Grey made a charming and very flattering speech, and, on behalf of the other political parties, Mr. Balfour, Mr. Redmond and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald paid us many compliments, which I fear we had not deserved, but to which I did my best to make a suitable reply. This little function was, I need hardly say, particularly gratifying, coming as it did after Mr. Ginnell's recent attack upon me and at a moment of great political tension.

In April there died a very old friend of my parents and of mine, Miss Charlotte Sulivan. She was a niece of the great Lord Palmerston, a very accomplished water-

colour artist, and in her youth the pupil of de Windt, many of whose masterpieces she possessed. She resided at Broom House, Fulham, where I often visited her, and in the gardens of which we had spent many hours in sketching the pretty peeps of river and old buildings obtainable from that secluded but picturesque spot. She had appointed me as one of her executors, and in the course of time it was my lot to sell the little house and grounds to Hurlingham Club, whose premises were immediately adjacent.

Directly opposite her house stood Lonsdale Cottage, which had formerly belonged to one of my forbears, where, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, he used to entertain the fashionable world of London, and in which it was said that more proposals of marriage had taken place than in any other superficial area of a similar size.

During this summer there was a Sporting Exhibition, at the Crystal Palace, I think; and as I had undertaken to collect any relics obtainable of John Peel, the celebrated huntsman, for this purpose, I visited Mr. Robinson Bell, his son-in-law, at Ireby, a village in my constituency, and from him procured the loan of John Peel's whip, spurs and horn. The latter is not straight like a modern hunting horn, but curved. I have no doubt, however, that he could blow a good loud blast on it, which, like his halloa, "could awaken the dead or the fox from his lair in the morning."

Before the Parliament Bill entered on the committee stage, a number of instructions appeared upon the paper. I had not much difficulty in dealing with most of them, but one, proposing to divide the Bill into two parts, the first relating to Money Bills and the second to Bills other than Money Bills, seemed to me to be

reasonable, as the procedure proposed in the two cases was different, and it well might be that the House would accept the former but not the latter. The instruction, however, was negatived and, after a resolution had been passed applying the Kangaroo closure to the committee proceedings, the House settled down to a long and animated discussion of this novel and important Bill. The committee stage was concluded on the 2nd of May, and from the 8th to the 11th of May the report stage was taken. I was somewhat disturbed at the proposal to vest in the Speaker the sole responsibility of deciding in each case what was and what was not a Money Bill, and Mr. Asquith suggested that two Members of the House should be annually nominated to assist me in coming to a decision. This proposal was eventually adopted at the last stage, as an amendment to the Lords' amendments. I had felt that in the case of a Bill which raised serious party controversy, the duty cast upon the Speaker was somewhat invidious and his decision might bring upon him severe criticism from one or other party. The assistance of two specially selected Members seemed, however, to provide him with a safeguard, and to this I agreed. As events turned out, although I had frequently occasion to consult these gentlemen, no difficulty ever occurred in the matter, for the clause was so carefully and elaborately drafted that I never had much doubt as to the category in which the Bills, which I had to consider, fell. I need here only add that in my judgment the celebrated Finance Bill of 1909, which was the immediate cause of the Parliament Act, would not have come under the provisions of Clause 1, Section 2 of the Parliament Act, as a " Money Bill," for it contained a number of provisions which were not within the definition of that clause

and section. The debates on the report stage passed off quietly and without any disturbing elements. Only one night was spent upon the third reading. Mr. Asquith on that occasion promised that the reform of the Upper Chamber would be undertaken during the current Session, but this reform is still unaccomplished. With the departure of the Parliament Bill to "another place" interest subsided and public attention was for a time directed to other quarters.

The unveiling of the Queen Victoria Memorial in front of Buckingham Palace attracted a vast crowd and was a remarkable spectacle, not diminished by the presence of the Kaiser and Kaiserin, who came to London for the function. My wife and I were honoured by an invitation to attend it, as well as the banquet at Buckingham Palace that night and a ball there a day or two later. After the memorial was unveiled the police were instructed to give information to any enquirers about the several allegorical figures grouped around it. It happens that one of the figures at the foot of the pedestal on which the statue of the Queen is placed represents "Maternity," and is the representation of a buxom lady with several children at her knees and feet. An enquirer, on being informed of the meaning of the figure, replied, "Maternity? Then she ought to be ashamed of herself, for she has no wedding ring."

Another ball which attracted a good deal of attention was a fancy dress dance, given by Mr. F. E. Smith and Lord Winterton, at Claridge's. This proved to be the first of a series of similar entertainments, which for a time became the vogue in London. I went to Claridge's in the dress of a Moorish grandee, which my brother, Colonel Cecil Lowther, had brought back with him

from Morocco a year or two previously. One lady, well known in political circles, who had been married about a year before, appeared in the costume of a nun, which, however, was hardly suitable to the interesting condition in which she manifestly appeared to be. Lord Charles Beresford observed about her that, following ancient custom, she deserved to be walled up.

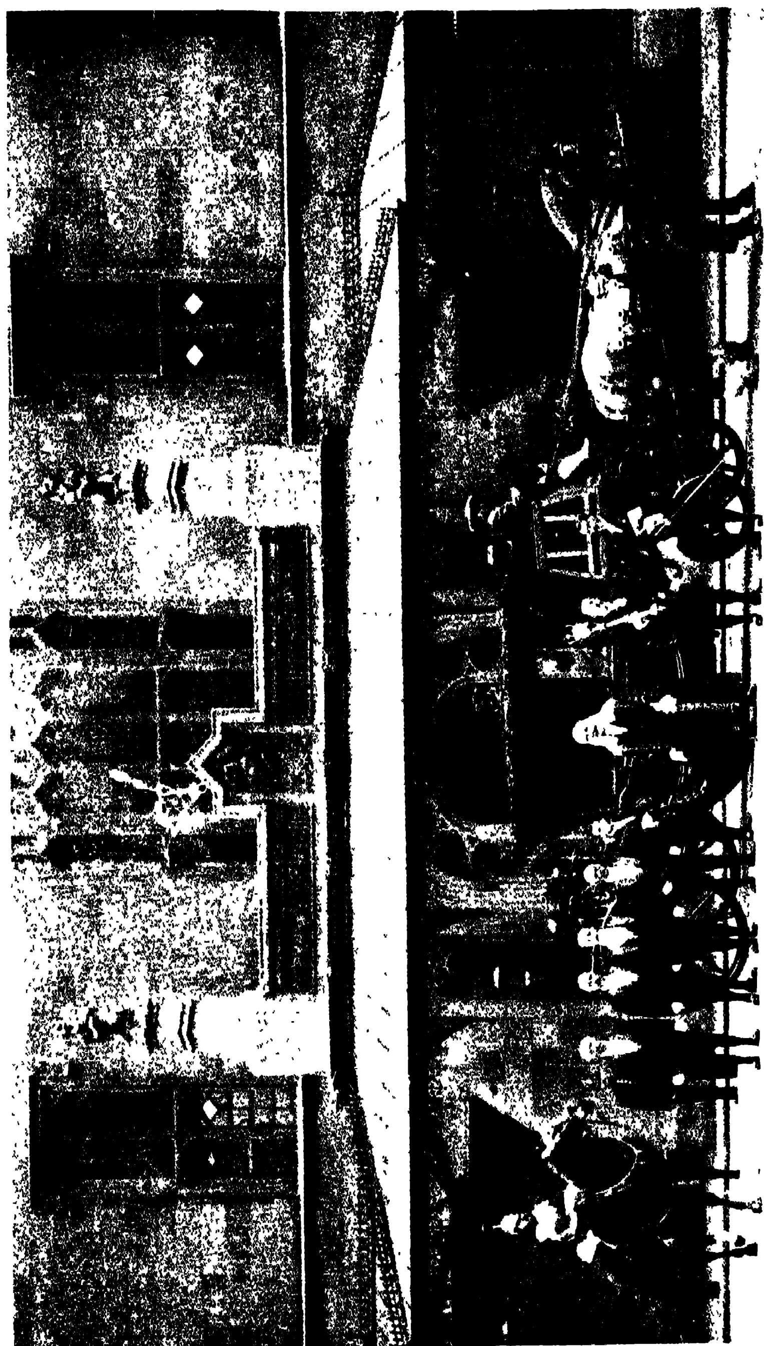
The Times waxed somewhat indignant about this ball and denounced the "general light-heartedness" which prevailed at a time when a grave constitutional crisis was impending. The imminent approach of the date of the Coronation was no doubt responsible for the cheerful disposition of the public, which manifested itself universally.

During the Whitsun recess I went to Marienbad to go through a course of baths and waters for my old enemy the gout; but I had a wretched time, for the gout developed in both feet and I was a complete prisoner in my room for some days. At first my only acquaintance in the place was the late Mr. Hoult, M.P. for a Liverpool division, but towards the end of my visit Mr. Henry Chaplin arrived; we saw a good deal of each other and exchanged much talk on politics and sport.

I got back to London in time to take part in many of the Coronation festivities. There was a luncheon party in Westminster Hall in honour of our Colonial guests, and I found myself between Sir Wilfred Laurier, the venerable and picturesque Canadian statesman, and Mr. Molteno, the Speaker of the South African Parliament, whose brother was at that time M.P. for a Scottish constituency. Unfortunately I had to leave before the speeches began, in order to take the chair of the House, which met as usual at 2.45 p.m.

My wife and I were also amongst the 500 guests at the banquet at Buckingham Palace, two days before the Coronation ceremony. It was a very brilliant and admirably organized function, and came to an end in time to allow many of the guests to go to the Shakespeare costume ball at the Albert Hall. Mrs. Arthur James impersonated Queen Elizabeth, and was escorted by her Court to a throne, erected below the large organ, from which she watched the groups representing the characters in Shakespeare's plays which paraded in front of her before the dancing began. The whole scene was very pretty and interesting.

Coronation Day was the 22nd of June. Robed in my wig and gold gown, I proceeded at 9.30 a.m. to the Abbey in the Speaker's state coach. This is a huge and ponderous vehicle dating from about 1700, said to have been designed by Daniel Marot, a Dutchman who worked in Paris. In the collection of state coaches at Lisbon there is one almost identical in general style and ornamentation, which was the property of a Princess de Rohan Soubise, whom Daniel Marot in his diary mentions as one of his clients. This seems to determine the question of who was the builder as well as the date of the coach. But how it came to belong to a Speaker is another matter, still shrouded in mystery. It was probably given or lent by King William or Queen Anne to the Speaker of the time, possibly to Sir Arthur Onslow, and since his time has remained in the Speaker's stables or in the Palace of Westminster for his use. Sir Hugh Lane, who examined the paintings on the panels, attributed them to Cipriani, or to a pupil of his (he was the painter of the Royal Coach *circa* 1750); but they are difficult to distinguish and have been much spoilt by having had the backgrounds at some



time or other entirely filled in with gilt. The coach is constructed to hold six persons, is profusely decorated and slung on thick leather straps to an elaborate superstructure above the two very large hind wheels, and to a lofty coach-box above two very small wheels in front. On this occasion we were only four occupants, viz. Mr. Gossett (the deputy Sergeant-at-Arms), Mr. E. Cadogan (my Secretary), Mr. Murrell (my train-bearer), and myself; but we took the mace with us inside and did not put it out of the window, as is the custom of the Lord Mayor. The coach was escorted by half-a-dozen messengers of the House of Commons, and by a single Life Guardsman in full uniform. How or why it came about that he should be the formal and recognized escort of the Speaker, I have never been able to ascertain. The problem of where to find a pair of horses sufficiently powerful to drag this big coach through the streets of London was solved by Messrs. Whitbread, the brewers, who lent me for the occasion a fine pair of magnificent dray-horses. And thereby hangs a tale, for these horses, being used to dipping their noses at frequent intervals into their nosebags, found themselves very hungry during their long wait outside the Abbey, and scenting hay or straw in the padding round the pole of the carriage, proceeded to bite through the leather covering and regale themselves with its contents.

Bearing in mind the disaster which had overtaken my predecessor, when the harness broke on his return from a state visit to the Queen in 1897, I had put in a requisition for new harness, and this was made in exact imitation of the old pattern by Messrs. Whippy.

It is unnecessary to attempt to give any account of the Coronation ceremony itself, and I will therefore only record that my place in the Abbey was in the front

row on the south side of the choir, that the mace was laid in front of me but was covered with a cloth when His Majesty came into the Abbey, thereby denoting that the authority of the Commons yielded to that of the King, and that opposite to me in a stall of the choir sat the Crown Prince of Germany, who seemed to behave with a levity unsuited to the solemn and important occasion.

I got back to the Speaker's House by 3 o'clock, when we entertained a large party at luncheon. In the evening my wife and I and our party went to the Mansion House, from the balcony of which we surveyed the vast swaying crowd below, in itself a never-to-be-forgotten sight. We did not attempt to go round the illuminations, as by 11 o'clock we had had enough of a crowded and exciting day.

I had endeavoured, but without avail, to obtain for Members of Parliament the privilege of being allowed to take their seats at a later hour than the general public, but the Earl Marshal (the Duke of Norfolk) proved inexorable, pleading the awkwardness of the entrances to the Abbey and the difficulty of getting a large crowd into a small space, as well as the necessity of all being in their seats before the first processions, which began at 9.30 a.m., were to arrive.

The Earl Marshal at a later date called my attention to the case of one honourable Member who had transferred his ticket of admission to the Abbey to a friend, who was not a M.P., although the tickets issued were clearly marked "Not transferable." When I passed the Earl Marshal's letter on to the offender, he offered a full apology and explained that he had in a moment of inadvertence yielded to the importunities of a friend and ex-M.P.

The garden party at Buckingham Palace, a gala performance at His Majesty's Theatre, and a National Thanksgiving service at St. Paul's were some of the other functions which my wife and I attended.

During this period of festivity and "light-heartedness" (*vide The Times*) we entertained at the Speaker's House a number of distinguished visitors, including Speaker Warren, Speaker of the Newfoundland Parliament, and subsequently Prime Minister there; Speaker Kerr of Canada, the Gaekwar of Baroda and the Maharanee, and a Cingalese Chief named Dunawhilly (I will not vouch for the spelling of his name), whose remarkable official costume, consisting of a flat-topped cap, very short jacket with full sleeves and bloomer pants, all in white, attracted much attention. My wife and daughter had made his acquaintance in Ceylon, and he was a very pleasant guest with a strongly-developed sense of humour.

We paid a week-end visit to an old friend, Mr. Pearson Gregory, at Harlaxton near Grantham, whose hall is decorated in the most extraordinary manner with festoons of some heavy material cased in plaster of Paris. The visit dwells in my memory because on Sunday, which was an inordinately hot day, the preacher had chosen as his text the words of St. Paul relating to the Church of the Laodiceans, "I would that ye were either cold or hot." As we were all streaming with perspiration, it was difficult to keep our countenances.

On the 20th of July, after the Lords had made a number of drastic amendments to the Parliament Bill, completely altering its provisions, Mr. Asquith wrote to Mr. Balfour informing him that the King had agreed to exercise his prerogative in such a way as to

secure the passing of the Parliament Bill in substantially the same form as it had left the Commons. This was a bombshell for the Opposition and led to some very disturbed and disagreeable scenes. On the 24th the Lords' amendments came up for consideration. Mr. Asquith moved their rejection *en bloc*, but after a few sentences he was received with cries of "Traitor!" "Redmond!" and so much disorder that, after vainly endeavouring to continue his speech, he sat down and declined to attempt to complete it. I tried my best to restore order—but in vain. I pointed out to the Opposition that the privilege of free speech in Parliament was one which should be specially dear to an Opposition, that the course which they were taking was a two-edged weapon which might be used some day against themselves, and so forth, but my appeals were in vain. My prophecy, however, soon came true, for when, after Mr. Balfour and Sir Edward Grey had spoken, Mr. F. E. Smith rose to speak, the Government supporters howled him down, and after more attempts on my part to restore order, seeing that it was hopeless, I invoked the aid of the Standing Order, which permits the Speaker to adjourn the House "on grave disorder arising," and adjourned the House to the following day. On the following day, however, matters were not much better and tempers had not yet cooled, for Lord Hugh Cecil, rising to ask a supplementary question, was not permitted to speak, and was compelled to leave his question unasked. Fuel was added to the flames by a letter, written and published by Mr. Pointer, Labour M.P. for Attercliffe, accusing me of having failed "to curb the wild spirits of the neurotic Tories," and adding that it was "the outcome of a violent party leaning" on my part. Upon Colonel Lockwood calling

attention to this as a breach of the privilege of the House, Mr. Pointer offered an apology, which I accepted and the incident terminated.

The demonstration of the Opposition was thought to be directed as much against Mr. Balfour as against the Government, for it was known that Mr. Balfour was counselling an abandonment of further resistance to the Parliament Bill, a course to which a large section of his Party, then and subsequently known as the "Diehards," was violently opposed.

Before the debate on the Lords' Amendments, interrupted by the scene on the 24th of July, was resumed, Mr. Balfour moved a vote of censure on the Government (discussed on the 7th of August) for "a gross violation of Constitutional liberty, whereby, among other evil consequences, the people will be precluded from again pronouncing on the policy of Home Rule." The Opposition believed that the promise to create 500 Peers had been obtained from His Majesty many months previously, and that the recent announcement of it had been held back until the Coronation festivities were over; but Mr. Asquith would not admit this statement, though he agreed that in the previous November the Cabinet had informed the King that, in the event of their obtaining a majority at the General Election, they hoped His Majesty would exercise his Constitutional powers which might involve the creation of a large number of Peers. The vote of censure occupied one sitting, was closured, and was defeated by 119, a few votes less than the normal Government majority.

In the meanwhile the Opposition had been rent in twain by the dissensions of the two wings favouring surrender and resistance respectively, and these diver gent views found expression in the resumed debate on

the Lords' Amendments, which took place on the 8th of August. Mr. Asquith's motion to reject them was eventually carried by 106 votes, and, as is well known, the Lords, notwithstanding the vigorous protests of the "Diehards," led by Lord Halsbury at the age of eighty-six, did not insist on their amendments, the Constitutional crisis came to an end, and the Bill became law.

Of all the debates in the House, except perhaps some on Foreign affairs, the debates on this Bill were in my opinion the most interesting which it was my lot to hear. The novelty of the topic, the far-reaching possibilities of the proposed changes, the references to history and precedent, the strong feeling aroused on both sides, and the uncertainty of the final result, brought to the discussions a vigour and an interest often absent from the discussion of matters, the issue of which was never in doubt. The opposition to the Bill was violent, because it was felt that under its provisions a Home Rule scheme might be passed through Parliament which had never received the *fiat* of the electorate. This eventually happened, although the provisions of the Parliament Act were never put to the supreme test, as, under the pressure of the war, the Lords desisted from carrying their opposition to its furthest limits. But—that is another story. In my judgment it is very doubtful if the machinery is adequate for the purpose proposed.

Although I am somewhat anticipating events, it may be well here to record what happened in 1914 with reference to this matter. The Home Rule Bill had then passed the House of Commons in three successive Sessions, and was before the Lords. The Parliament Act says that "if a Bill is passed by the House of

Commons in three successive Sessions and having been sent up to the House of Lords at least one month before the end of the Session is rejected by the House of Lords in each of those Sessions, that Bill shall on its rejection for the third time by the House of Lords, unless the House of Commons direct to the contrary, be presented to His Majesty and become an Act of Parliament on the Royal Assent being signified thereto, notwithstanding that the House of Lords have not consented to the Bill." The Act goes on to say: "When a Bill is presented to His Majesty for assent in pursuance of the provisions of this section, there shall be endorsed on the Bill the certificate of the Speaker of the House of Commons, signed by him, that the provisions of this section have been duly complied with." At the time to which I refer, Whitsuntide 1914, the Home Rule Bill had three times passed the Commons and had twice been rejected by the Lords. If the Lords were to reject the Bill a third time, no difficulty could arise; but what would happen if the Lords did not reject but adjourned the discussion of the Bill from month to month, or from week to week, until the session came to an end, or *sine die*? For, however prolonged the session, there must come a moment when the session terminates. I asked myself how, under those circumstances, I could give the required certificate? And I was sorely perplexed, for I could not say that a Bill was rejected upon which the Lords had deliberately abstained from passing a final judgment. Sub-section (3) of Section 2 appears to anticipate and provide for this eventuality. It says: "A Bill shall be deemed to be rejected by the House of Lords if it is not passed by the House of Lords either without amendment or with such amendments only

as may be agreed to by both Houses"; but the difficulty still remained of fixing the exact moment of the termination of the session. In my perplexity I sought the assistance of the Master of the Rolls, Sir Herbert Cozens-Hardy. He was a man universally respected, not only for his great legal attainments, but for his upright, fearless and independent judgment. He had been for some years a Liberal Member of the House of Commons, was well acquainted with our procedure, and, at the time of which I speak, had for some little time as Master of the Rolls presided over the Court of Appeal with singular ability and success. I motored over from Campsea Ashe to Letheringsett, his residence in Norfolk, and taking with me a copy of the Parliament Act, laid my doubts before him. We had a long consultation, and in the end his decision was that I could not give the required certificate, so long as the Lords postponed coming to a decision on the Bill, and that no amount of delay on their part would justify me in saying that the Bill had been rejected until the session had actually terminated, and in his view this moment did not arise until the Commission was read proroguing Parliament.

For the benefit of the uninitiated I should explain that, on the last day of the session, a Commission from the King is read giving authority to the Commissioners to give the Royal Assent to Bills agreed upon by both Houses, and when this formality has been completed, a further Commission is read proroguing Parliament. It is evident that after the latter Commission has been read and Parliament has been prorogued, no further business can be transacted, but until that moment arrives it is still possible for the Lords to pass a Bill, and I could not therefore say that a Bill had

been rejected within the meaning of Section 2, Sub-Section (3).

A further technical difficulty also presented itself to me, viz. that my certificate had to be endorsed "on the Bill," and that so long as the Lords kept the Bill in their custody I could not get hold of the document for the purpose of endorsement.

Armed with this authority (the Master of the Rolls' opinion being quite decided and unequivocal), although I was resolved to act in accordance with his advice, I did not feel particularly happy at the contemplation of what would occur when the crucial moment should arrive. The crucial moment, however, never did arrive, for soon after the War broke out events so shaped themselves that the Home Rule Bill was returned to the Commons (how or why this came to pass I have never been able to discover) and the certificate was endorsed upon it, without any question being raised. In my opinion, the only way of putting the Act into force is to wait until the fourth session, when the Bill, not passed by the Lords in the third session, can be introduced into the House of Commons, endorsed with the Speaker's certificate and submitted to the Crown direct, without being sent to the Lords. The Speaker under these circumstances can give his certificate without a qualm.

In other respects also the provisions of the Act were doomed to sterility. The preamble, for example, of which we heard a great deal, the subject-matter of which, according to Mr. Asquith, "brooked no delay," and according to Lord Loreburn involved the introduction immediately of a "twin Bill" for the reform of the House of Lords, has remained a dead letter, although fourteen years have now elapsed. Even the

last clause, which limited the duration of Parliament to five years, had to be twice or thrice amended, and the very Parliament, which enacted it, prolonged its own life until it died at a good old age of eight years.

To return to the events of August 1911: The moment of the Constitutional crisis coincided with a wave of abnormal heat in London. On the 8th of August, the day on which the Lords' Amendments were rejected, the temperature in the House was 78°, and on the following day, the hottest I can remember, the thermometer in my chair never fell below 80°; on the terrace it registered 95°, and at Greenwich it reached the record of 100°. I was in the chair till 2 a.m., and had an exceptionally unpleasant experience. On this night the second reading of the Finance Bill, which in a normal year would have been taken in May, was under discussion, and I well remember Sir George Younger's humorous speech: "Is this a time," he said, "to be discussing finance, when the thermometer registers 100° and the London hotels are on fire?" The last observation was with reference to a fire which had occurred that evening at the Carlton Hotel. The *non sequitur* tickled my fancy and, notwithstanding the heat of my full-bottomed wig and thick silk gown, provoked a smile. Whilst I could not escape from my very unsuitable apparel, I was filled with envy of Mr. Hugh Law, who appeared in a white costume from top to toe, and of Mr. Keir Hardie, who had attired himself in white Tussorah silk, though he still wore his customary red tie.

On the following day the Commons voted themselves salaries of £400 a year, and the Government, by including the proposal in the Appropriation Bill, avoided any further discussion, as well as the difficulties of deciding

under what conditions the salaries were to be paid, or at what period of time they were to commence. These matters remained for me at a subsequent date to decide.

Just at this moment there was a general railway strike, which mightily inconvenienced all holiday traffic and postponed for some days the adjournment; but the strike being temporarily settled, we rose for the autumn recess on the 22nd of August, to meet again on the 24th of October.

In the autumn I went to Scotland for some stalking and shooting. At Glenartny, Lord Ancaster's finely situated shooting lodge near Crieff, I enjoyed some excellent sport both with grouse and deer, and at Glenquoich, which Mr. Arthur James had again rented, I was very fortunate with the rifle, and on my last day there secured a stag of fifteen points, a rarity even in that celebrated and productive forest. Visits to the Londonderrys at Wynyard and to the Radnors at Longford afforded good partridge shooting and heavy bags. The day before the House met again my old friend Lord Onslow succumbed to a prolonged illness. I had known him nearly all my life. We had been at Eton together, in the same house and, though he was never in the House of Commons, I had been frequently brought into contact with him, both when he was Minister of Agriculture and when he was Lord Chairman of the House of Lords. He had many irons in the fire, perhaps too many, for he was not physically very strong, and the energy with which he carried out his many and multifarious occupations must have subjected his strength to a severe strain. Work, sport, art, the drama, society, horticulture, mechanical inventions, foreign travel, were all of deep interest to him,

and he threw himself heart and soul into them all and enjoyed them all thoroughly. We had one other bond of union, in that he was a descendant of the great Arthur Onslow, who was Speaker for thirty-seven years, and could claim as well two other Onslow Speakers amongst his forbears. It was in his hospitable home at Clandon Park near Guildford that I first saw and heard the telephone, though I forget exactly the year of my introduction to this invaluable but irritating product of civilization.

Very soon after the reassembling of Parliament Mr. Balfour announced his resignation of the leadership of the Opposition. The grounds stated were his physical inability to undergo the strain of embarking upon a new condition of politics likely to arise in the next year, and the evident dissensions in the Party which he had hitherto led. The real reason, I gathered, was that a large section of his Party were dissatisfied with his handling of the Fiscal question, and were anxious for some leader who would take a more vigorous line on that topic. The choice lay between Mr. Austen Chamberlain and Mr. Walter Long, but in order to avoid a split they both patriotically withdrew their claims in favour of Mr. Bonar Law, who was unanimously elected to the position.

I was amused at an article which appeared at this time in the *Spectator*, which suggested that I should resign the Speakership and offer myself as a candidate for the post. I need hardly say that the idea had never entered into my head, and that such qualifications as I might possess for the office I held were not those that were necessary for so important a place as the direction of the policy of a great Party.

The chief topic of the autumn Session was the National

Insurance Bill, which was a complicated and lengthy measure. Before the report stage was concluded it had been very considerably altered, no less than 470 amendments having been made in the Bill. At the last stage, which was taken under a "guillotine" resolution, the Opposition walked out and declined to take any further part in the proceedings, as a protest against what they considered the unfair treatment to which they had been subjected in closuring so important a measure. The third reading of the Bill was practically unanimous, only 21 Members out of a House of 345 voting against it.

Before the end of the year Mr. Emmott, the Chairman of Ways and Means, was raised to the Peerage in recognition of the great services he had rendered to the House in that very difficult post. Although his manner was perhaps occasionally somewhat abrupt, his impartiality, sound judgment and mastery of the technicalities of procedure were universally recognized and admired, and the congratulations and best wishes of the House went with him to his new sphere. I was sorry to lose him, as he had been of great assistance to me during the years we worked together, and I was much indebted to him on many occasions for having taken my place in the chair when the gout or some other less disagreeable cause had compelled my absence.

Shortly before the end of the Session, which closed on the 16th of December, I was invited to take part in an interesting little function in the Library of the House, when the bust of Mr. Cremer was presented by Lord Weardale and accepted by myself on behalf of the House. Mr. Cremer had been a Labour M.P. and a zealous peace advocate. He had won the Nobel Prize with an essay on Peace, and, though he was never a distinguished Member, he was zealous in the cause which he had made

his own and was highly respected by all his colleagues.

The policy of admitting into the Library busts of Members, however popular or notable in their day, is one which requires to be carefully watched and not too frequently adopted, otherwise the space, already limited, will be liable to serious inroads and the rooms intended for works of reference and for study may become a Parliamentary Valhalla. It has often occurred to me that the north front of Westminster Hall, where there are hundreds of unoccupied niches, would form a suitable place for statues of Parliamentary celebrities not quite up to the standard of pedestals in the Central or the Members' lobbies.

About this time my old friend, Charles Brookfield, was, much to the general surprise, appointed Examiner of Plays. Owing to a breakdown in health, he had been obliged to retire from the stage some years previously, and had for some time been in what is called "reduced circumstances." On the principle that an old poacher makes the best gamekeeper, his appointment was unexceptionable, for he had written some very *risqué* though successful plays; but he was a clever writer, a brilliant conversationalist and a thorough master of dramatic literature. Unfortunately, his health grew gradually worse and he did not long survive to discharge the duties of his office.

I wish I could recall some of the stories he told me, but only one or two survive in my memory. A lost dog was advertised for in the following terms: "Lost: A spaniel called Ben, answers reluctantly to 'D——n you, come here!'"

As an example of the use of words without understanding their meaning, he used to tell of a schoolboy's account of the death of Ahab, who "went out venture shooting,

but somebody drawing a bow at one, hit Ahab by mistake. A 'venture' is a sort of antelope found in Palestine."

One day seeing Sir Charles Wyndham at the Garrick Club during the run of "David Garrick," in which Wyndham played the title rôle, Brookfield said to him: "You look more like Garrick every day," and when Wyndham acknowledged the compliment added "And less like him every night."

On one occasion Weedon Grossmith asked Brookfield what he thought of a play by Terry called "The War of the Roses," and whether it was anything like the real thing. "No," said Brookfield, "much longer and much bloodier."

Before bidding good-bye to the year 1911 I ought to add that during the year I had given several sittings for my portrait to Mr. Hugh Rivière. The Benchers of the Inner Temple had recorded the fact that two of their number, Lord Halsbury and Mr. Gully, were simultaneously Lord Chancellor and Speaker of the House of Commons, by hanging two full-length pictures of them in their hall, and when in this year the coincidence was repeated, in the case of Lord Loreburn and myself, they determined again to mark the occasion in the same manner. The portraits of Lord Loreburn by Mr. Harris Brown, and of myself by Mr. Rivière, now hang in the Benchers' Parliament Chamber. They are not full lengths but of more modest dimensions. That of Lord Loreburn, in Privy Councillor's uniform, is an excellent likeness and a pleasing picture. That of myself in wig and gown, does not, however, rank amongst Mr. Rivière's greatest successes.

I had become a Bencher of my Inn in 1906, having been proposed by Mr. James Moorsom, K.C., a peculiar

old gentleman, who resided at Keswick, and, although formerly a political opponent in my constituency, had always been on very friendly terms with me. He was subject to fits of eccentricity, and on one occasion, dispossessing a fly-driver from his seat on the box, took his place and galloped the fly up and down the streets of Keswick, cracking his whip and vociferating, "I am the mad flyman of Fieldside!" (the name of his residence in the town). On another occasion, disguising himself as a waiter, he insisted on waiting at a dinner which was being given by Canon Rawnsley to the Master of Balliol and other guests at the Vicarage, until he could stand it no longer, and, taking off his wig and whiskers, he said, "You are all so damned dull that I must sit down with you and cheer you up a bit," which he proceeded to do. In appearance he resembled the traditional portraits of Mr. Pickwick, by which name he was known locally. But with all his eccentricities he was an amiable and kindly individual. One of his sons, Kenneth, was a clerk in the House of Commons, a brilliant but erratic young man and a frequent visitor to our house at Hutton John. Unfortunately he died before the promise of a successful career could be realized.

CHAPTER XXIII

1912-1913

Death of my Father—Home Rule Bill—We Leave Hutton John—Turbulence in the House—Death of Lord Peel—Fate of Women's Vote—Visit to Christiania—Cat and Mouse Bill—Suffragette Disturbances—The Marconi Scandal—Death of Alfred Lyttelton—Memorial to Sir James Graham—Queen Adelaide Hill.

1912

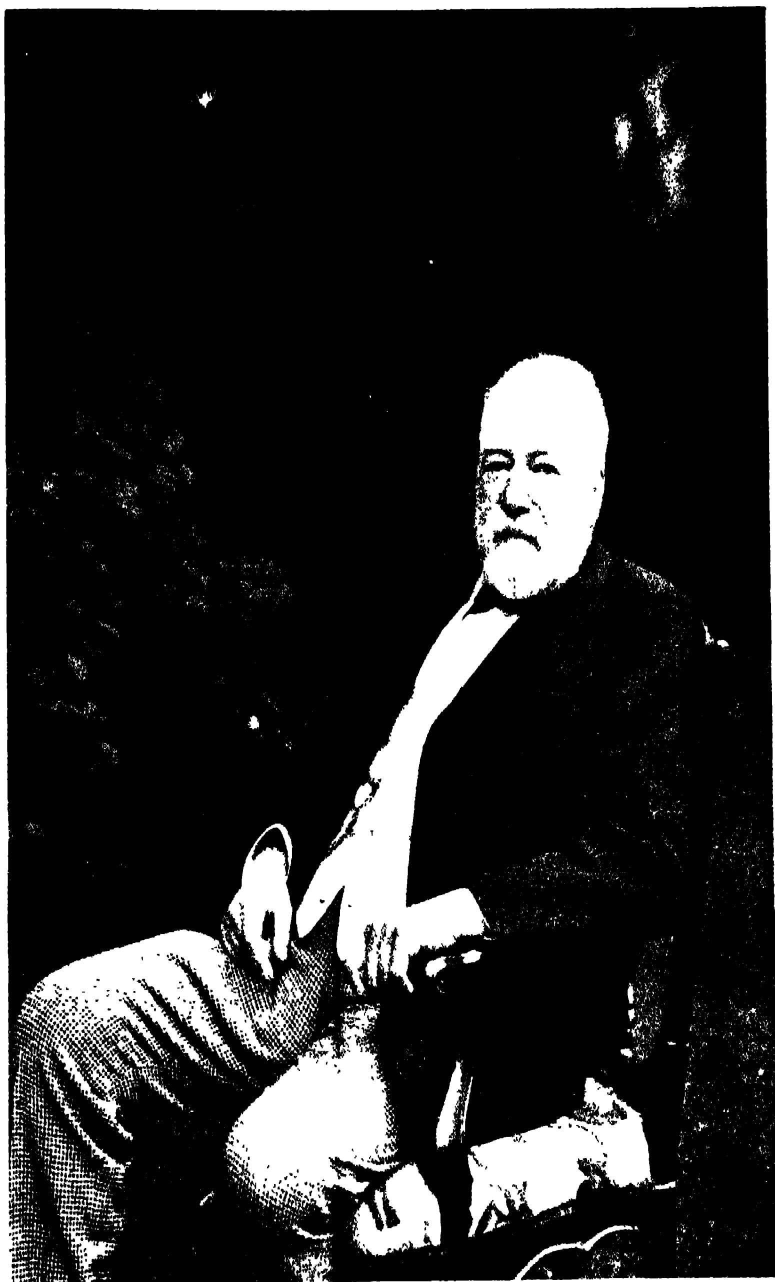
Before the end of January I had lost my father, beloved by all who knew him. He died on the 23rd of the month in his ninety-first year. Until within a few months of his death his health had been good, his eyesight unimpaired, and, though slightly deaf, his memory and spirits were good. At times his mind was back in the past and he would occasionally instruct his coachman to prepare for an approaching journey from Campsea Ashe to London by ordering relays of post-horses to be ready along the road.

Mr. Arnold White the well-known publicist (to use a modern bit of jargon) was staying with my father shortly before his death, on Trafalgar Day, 1909, at Campsea Ashe, which is noted for its remarkably fine and old cedars, and wrote the following lines:

The stately cedar stricken on the lawn,
The old man waiting for the coming dawn,
Leave lasting memories; the first for strength and beauty,
The other—Nelson-like—has taught us duty.

It is said that "to live is to outlive," but in my father's case he had taken such precautions as were

possible to avoid this drawback to prolonged life by making a number of friends amongst men and women very much younger than himself, who were kind enough to pay him frequent visits from which he derived great pleasure. His sense of humour never deserted him, and he could enjoy a joke as much as anybody. He was buried in the same grave as my mother at Campsea Ashe on the 27th of January. Most of my family relations were present, except my brother Gerard, who was at Constantinople, and my wife and daughter, who were at Khartoum on a visit to Sir Reginald and Lady Wingate. At the moment of his death I was in Berlin. I had started ahead of a deputation of representative persons, with whom I was preparing to visit Russia, and was staying with my old friend Sir Edward Goschen at the Embassy, when I received a telegram summoning me to return. This deputation, which consisted of some Peers, some representatives of the Army and the Navy, some Members of Parliament, a Bishop or two and some business men who had special Russian connections, visited Petersburg and Moscow in response to an invitation which had been sent by some members of the Duma, who had been entertained in London the previous year. Some objection was taken to the composition of the delegation, and one honourable member bombarded me with letters and telegrams of enquiry as to the capacity in which I was going out, whether I had been authorized by the House to represent it, how the selection of individuals had been made, and so forth. I explained that I was not going out in any representative capacity but as a private individual, anxious to renew my fifty-year-old acquaintance with Petersburg and desirous of seeing my sister, Mme. Vieugué, who lived there, and that I had had nothing to say to the selection of the party, which had



Hon. William Lowther

been made by the Committee of the Duma itself, our hosts.

In my enforced absence Lord Weardale took charge of the party and, being an admirable French scholar, and, by his marriage with a Russian lady, well qualified to act as spokesman of the party, assisted in making the visit a great success. Mr. E. Cadogan, my secretary, accompanied the delegation and made himself as popular as he was efficient.

When Parliament opened on the 14th of February the programme announced contained the three chief items of Home Rule for Ireland, Disestablishment of the Church for Wales, and Manhood Suffrage for the United Kingdom. These topics occupied almost the whole time of the exceptionally long Session, which did not terminate until the 7th of March of the following year. A strike of coal-miners and of dockers, as well as innumerable Suffragette disturbances, foreign affairs, and the routine business of the House filled up the time not devoted to the three chief Bills.

The Home Rule Bill was introduced on the 11th of April in a very full and excited House, and obtained its first reading on the 16th by a majority of 94. Mr. Bonar Law, the new Leader of the Opposition, made the mistake of occasionally interjecting observations, not always very wise, which led Mr. Asquith to retort that this was an example of the "new style" of leadership. In a very short time Mr. Bonar Law learnt his lesson and there were no more interjections. The feeling on the part of the Opposition ran high, and as time went on, became stronger and stronger. What chiefly rankled in their minds was that the Home Rule policy, which had been repeatedly rejected by the constituencies and ignored at the last election, was being forced upon the

country against the will of the majority, and that the Constitution had been profoundly altered by the Parliament Act in order to cram the hated Bill down unwilling throats. After one of the debates I received a note from Mr. Spencer Leigh Hughes, one of the most amusing but rarest speakers in the House, to the following effect:

"It may amuse you to know that the first Unionist speaker on Tuesday was LONG" (Mr. Walter Long), "the last Liberal speaker was SHORTT" (subsequently Home Secretary), "and the only man over ninety years of age who spoke was YOUNG" (Mr. Young, an Irish Nationalist Member).

On the 9th of May, however, the second reading passed by 101. The second reading of the Welsh Disestablishment Bill followed a week later—majority 87; and then we adjourned for Whitsuntide. As we had had no Easter holiday, the adjournment for Whitsun lasted nearly a fortnight.

I spent a very enjoyable time in Cumberland climbing Saddleback with my daughter, walking over the Stake Pass to Dungeon Ghyll, and making several other expeditions. My only regret was that the time for finally leaving Hutton John was approaching. At my father's death I had inherited his place in Suffolk, Campsea Ashe, and I had therefore made arrangements with Mr. F. Hudleston, the owner of Hutton John, to terminate my tenancy of that attractive and historical old house in the autumn, whilst my wife and I were carrying out some improvements and alterations in our new home.

Amongst other duties which fell to my lot as Speaker was that of acting as one of the A.K. Fellowship trustees. Mr. Albert Kahn, a French financier with strong philanthropic and pacific intentions, had founded

a trust for travelling fellowships in the chief countries of Europe and in the United States. His aim was to promote international peace and amity by the diffusion of knowledge gained by travelling Fellows and published by them in essays, recording their views of the several countries visited. For this purpose the elected Fellows were to receive a handsome honorarium and devote a year to travel. The difficulty of selection was devolved upon the Vice-Chancellor of London University, the Lord Chief Justice, the Lord Chancellor, the Foreign Secretary, and the Speaker. Every year these gentlemen, or some of them, meet and make the selection from the lists sent in by the authorities of the principal Universities and some other public bodies, and Mr. Albert Kahn himself, with his friend, M. Hovelaque, generally come to London. During my period of office I attended all these meetings and assisted in making the selections required. I doubt, however, whether this enterprise, being undertaken on so limited a scale as any private individual could finance, notwithstanding Mr. Kahn's generous munificence, is likely to have any far-reaching effect, and I fear that the results of the Fellows' labours are insufficiently circulated amongst the public to lead to much practical result.

I was much amused about this time by a lobby story which was reported to me to the following effect: A new House of Commons clerk, whose duty it was to tick off the names of Members as they passed through the division lobby, did not know Mr. Asquith by sight and asked him his name. Mr. Handel Booth, a Member who took an active part in the secondary proceedings of the House, where he was a frequent speaker and very regular attendant, being told of the clerk's failure, said: "Well, I'm not surprised, for he did not even know me."

Before the Home Rule Bill got into committee I had to consider a number of instructions, of which notice had been given, but there was only one which passed the close scrutiny to which I always submitted these difficult and dilatory motions, and that was a proposal to divide the Bill into two parts, the first dealing with the alterations in Ireland itself and the second with the consequential alterations in the composition of the British Parliament. This was discussed but rejected before the Bill entered into its lengthy and heated committee stage, of which of course I was not a witness.

The first sitting in committee was on the 15th of June, and the last on the 12th of December. The "Ulster" question was the dominant note, or at all events the underlying theme, throughout this prolonged struggle. The first amendment, proposed by Mr. Agar Robartes, was designed to exclude the four northern counties from the operation of the Act, and the final adjustment, for it can hardly be called a settlement, has left the matter almost exactly where the adoption of Mr. Agar Robartes' amendment would have placed it. After the first few days in committee it became necessary for the House to switch itself on to other pressing matters, and by the time of the autumn adjournment the Bill had not got beyond the second clause. The Franchise Bill, giving practically manhood suffrage, but not attempting to deal with the redistribution problem, passed its second reading on the 8th of July, but was laid aside until the winter. There was plenty of matter for discussion in the routine business of the House; the continued Suffragette disturbances, with their sequelæ, viz. imprisonment, hunger strikes and forcible feeding; the transport strike, in which Mr. Ben Tillett distinguished himself and disgusted everybody by the violence of his outbursts against

Lord Devonport, the chairman of the Port of London Authority; Naval Defence, and other topics. These occupied our time until the 8th of August, when we rose for the autumn recess.

Feeling was beginning to run high during the summer months and reflected itself in occasional noisy and angry scenes in the House, though there was no serious outburst until the autumn.

In the meanwhile social duties had occupied some little part of the time which I could spare from graver matters. I had made the acquaintance of Baron Marschall von Bieberstein, the new German Ambassador, a former colleague of my diplomatic brother in Constantinople, and we gave a large dinner party at the Speaker's House to meet him. Princess Christian and Princess Victoria, the Italian Ambassador and the Marchesa Imperiali, a very charming and popular pair with whom we subsequently became very closely acquainted, the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, Lord and Lady Powis, Lord Cadogan, Sir Charles Darling, Sir Reginald and Lady Wingate, Sir W. Garstin and the American Ambassador and Mrs. Whitelaw Reid made up the party to meet the Marschalls. The Ambassador was a tall and very fat man, who looked better in evening clothes than in uniform, but not attractive in either. He had established a great reputation as a clever and capable diplomat at the Peace Congress at the Hague in 1907, but it was achieved in resisting and not in advocating pacific proposals, and it is at least very doubtful if his influence could or would in any way have averted the catastrophe of the 4th of August 1914. He had been Foreign Secretary in Germany and German Ambassador in Constantinople, where he had managed to obtain considerable influence with the Young Turkish party and to alienate them from the

attachment to England which they had at first shown. He died in September, having been little more than a year in London.

A few days after the Marschall dinner my wife and I had the pleasure of receiving M. Deschanel and his wife at luncheon. The French Ambassador, M. Cambon, the Marquis and Marchioness of Hamilton, the Attorney-General, Mr. and Mrs. J. Seely, Mr. and Lady Beatrice Pretyman, Lady Newton, the Sergeant-at-Arms, Sir David and Lady Horatia Erskine, and Miss Asquith made up the party to meet our distinguished guest. At that time M. Deschanel was President of the Chamber and filled that difficult post with general approval and support. He was a good English scholar and a very pleasant gentleman. His election to the Presidency of the Republic, with his failure in health, exciting experiences, sudden resignation and early death, are fresh in the memories of all who read contemporary history.

I had to cope at this time with a domestic problem of some magnitude, viz. the ultimate fate of my old home Lowther Lodge. At my father's death I inherited this magnificent house, built for him in 1873–4 on far too large a scale. It was well described as a country house in London, and the illusion was completed by the two acres of garden in which it stood. For the purposes of entertainment it would be difficult to find a more conveniently adapted house, but I had no immediate need of any such house for any such purpose. The Speaker's House was ample and there was every prospect of my still remaining there for some years. I tried to let Lowther Lodge, but without avail, and then I offered it for sale by auction. Before the day arrived, however, I received from Lord Curzon, acting on behalf of the Royal

Geographical Society, an offer to purchase, which my advisers recommended me to accept, and the house then passed to the Society. Very few structural alterations have been made and the rooms remain the same except for some disfiguring pillars in the large drawing-room and the dining-room, a necessity, I understand, due to the weight of the library which has been lodged on the first floor.

We spent the summer for the most part at Hutton John. I made an interesting trip one day to Eskdalemuir Observatory, where a number of seismographs for recording earth tremors are installed. Mr. Walker, who was in charge, took me round and explained their action and the method by which the *locus in quo* of a recorded earthquake is guessed. He also assured me that the instruments were so delicately adjusted that they would record the striking of heavy waves on the west coast of Ireland during a severe Atlantic storm.

On the 5th of October we said good-bye to our friends at Hutton John, which we left with extreme regret, having much enjoyed our eleven years' stay in that delightful old house and beautiful neighbourhood.

When we resumed work in October it became necessary to set up a time-table for the progress of the Home Rule Bill in committee. Matters went tolerably smoothly until a great explosion came on the 11th of November. For the benefit of the uninitiated in Parliamentary procedure, I must explain that before any clause of a Bill can be considered, dealing with the allocation of public money for any purpose, it is necessary that the sum required should be voted in a committee of the whole House and agreed to on report by the House. The resolution in committee had been duly passed, but when it came up for consideration on report, with myself in the

chair, Sir F. Banbury, whose zeal for economy was as ardent as it was persistent, moved an amendment limiting the total sum to be spent to £2,500,000 in any one year. He was briefly answered by the Postmaster-General, Mr. Herbert Samuel, and, the debate collapsing, an unexpected division was taken, resulting in the defeat of the Government by 22 votes. The Opposition shouted themselves hoarse with jubilant excitement and called loudly for the resignation of Ministers. Mr. Asquith moved the adjournment of the House and we rose at 4.30 p.m. Two days later, Mr. Asquith moved the rescission of the resolution as amended by Sir F. Banbury's amendment. This led to a series of violent scenes; Mr. Harcourt was denied a hearing, Sir William Bull called the Prime Minister a traitor and I had to request him to withdraw from the Chamber; the Attorney-General was shouted down and, as much uproar continued which made debate impossible, I adjourned the House for an hour, in the hopes that on its resumption we might proceed in a calmer atmosphere. But my anticipations were not realized, for on resumption the uproar was as great as ever. The Opposition were determined that no further progress should be made; they shouted down one of their own number, Lord Helmsley, and kept up a constant chorus of "Adjourn! Adjourn!" It was evident after a time that no good purpose would be achieved by allowing the pandemonium to continue, and I had to adjourn the House for the night. The first adjournment was evidently a mistake, but I could not foresee the scene which followed and I had hoped that a brief interval would have been sufficient to calm the surging tempest.

Just as I had declared the House to be adjourned and was leaving the Chair, Mr. Ronald McNeill, who hap-

pened to be standing on the left of my chair, seized my small bound copy of the Orders of the House and, hurling it across at Mr. Winston Churchill, cut him on the forehead. As the House was then technically adjourned and not sitting, I could take no action, but on the following day Mr. McNeill made a full and handsome apology, which was frankly accepted by Mr. Churchill.

I made the suggestion that in conference with the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, I should endeavour to discover some method of getting out of our difficulties, which would be more in accordance with precedent than the course proposed by Mr. Asquith, and calm was for the time being restored.

On the Monday following, the deadlock was resolved by rejecting the amended resolution and introducing an entirely fresh resolution in committee dealing on somewhat different lines with the finance of the Bill. My action in adjourning the House on the occasion of the disturbance was questioned, on the ground that as the cries raised of "Adjourn" and "Divide" had been perfectly orderly and Parliamentary expressions, it could not be said that a "state of grave disorder" had arisen, under which alone I had the power of adjournment. This was somewhat of a "poser," but I explained that whilst Parliamentary cries coming from individuals were orderly, a determined and continued repetition of them in concert and evident combination would become disorderly. This was, I think, in conformity with the common law, as it was undoubtedly in accordance with common sense. The unlucky copy of the "Orders" is still in my possession, and a bent corner of the leather binding bears evidence of the improper purpose to which it had been applied. I am glad to observe, however, that the hatchet (in book form) has been buried and that at a banquet given to cele-

brate Mr. Churchill's return for Epping in October 1924, Mr. Ronald McNeill proposed his health in amicable and felicitous terms.

Just after these incidents I received several letters from old Parliamentary hands and prominent people, thanking me for the course I had adopted and, to quote one of them, "saving the House alike from the repetition of the lamentable scene of Wednesday and from the high-handed action that provoked it."

The Home Rule Bill eventually passed through committee on the 12th of December, and after some progress had been made with Welsh Disestablishment, the House rose for the Christmas holidays.

Just before then my wife and I had been staying with Mr. Harcourt at Nuneham for a shoot, to which the Prince of Wales, who was then an undergraduate at Oxford, had come over. The other guests were Lord Willingdon, Mr. W. H. Grenfell, Captain W. Cadogan, and Sir Lionel Earle. We had a capital day's shooting and the Prince proved himself as good a shot as in later years he has proved himself a rider.

In the autumn a great Parliamentary figure, one of my predecessors in the Chair, Lord Peel, had passed away. In an earlier page I have referred to his striking personality and distinguishing characteristics, and will only add here that after he had retired and up to a few months of his death, he was a regular attendant at the meetings of the Trustees of the British Museum, in the welfare of which he took a deep and abiding interest. I had more than once visited him at his country house near Sandy in Bedfordshire and enjoyed the pleasure of talking over his Parliamentary experiences.

An amusing story is told of a series of unfortunate observations attributed to a noble lord, not always very

discreet in his utterances. It is said that soon after my election to the Speakership the noble Peer, meeting Mr. Edward Gully in the street, descanted to him on the merits of the new Speaker as compared with his predecessors, until it suddenly occurred to him that he was addressing the son of a former occupant of the Chair, when he hastily turned the conversation into other channels. Then, meeting Mr. William Peel, he told him of what had just occurred, until it dawned upon him that he was making the same mistake. Mr. Peel, it is said, replied: "There is Arthur Brand—you had better go and tell him the same story." Arthur Brand was also the son of a former Speaker, Lord Hampden.

Another amusing story which recurs to me as having been current at about this period, is that of a dear old lady who, having been persuaded to witness a performance of "Antony and Cleopatra," observed on leaving the theatre, "What a contrast to the home life of our late dear Queen Victoria!"

The Christmas holiday, which was very short, was spent by my wife and myself at Campsea Ashe, the alterations having been completed, and we then occupied our new home for the first time.

1913

The House having reassembled on the 30th of December and passed a time-table for the remaining stages of the Home Rule Bill, the first fortnight of January was spent on report and third reading. The Bill was then sent up to the Lords, where it eventually met its expected fate. It is worth recording that almost the last amendment moved was one by Sir E. Carson to exclude Ulster, similar in intention to the first amendment moved by Mr. Agar Robartes six months previously.

The Home Rule Bill having been disposed of so far as the House of Commons was concerned, it became necessary to finish up the remaining stages of the Welsh Church Disestablishment Bill, and these were accordingly also completed and the Bill sent " to another place."

There remained the Franchise Bill, in connection with which a novel situation arose, in which I had to take a part. The Bill did not profess to deal with the question of the admission of women to the franchise, but Sir Edward Grey gave notice of an amendment to leave out the word " male," in order that, at a subsequent stage, the eligibility of women to the franchise should be considered under some of the subsequent proposed amendments. The Bill had already got into committee, but nevertheless I was asked to say what the effect on the fate of the Bill would be, should it return to the House with one of these amendments included in the text.

Mr. Bonar Law, on the evening of Wednesday the 22nd of February, came to my library and raised the point that the proposed amendment would completely alter the intention and character of the Bill. I asked him to postpone raising the question until I had had time to consider the matter fully, but I informed some Members of the Government of what had happened and of my difficulty. On the 25th Mr. Asquith wrote to me upon the matter, being fully informed of Mr. Bonar Law's point and of my *primâ facie* acquiescence in the view submitted by him.

After taking a week-end, spent at Tring with Lord Rothschild, to consider the matter, I came to the conclusion that the adoption of any of the three alternative qualifications proposed, by which women would be qualified to vote, would bring about such a change in the

Bill as to completely alter its general purport and intention and convert it into a new Bill. My decision was based upon a ruling already mentioned of Mr. Speaker Peel's in a somewhat similar case, and I am satisfied that, however unexpected, it was correct. The effect of it was to put an extinguisher upon any chance which the women might have had of having their claims recognized in the current legislation, and the Prime Minister withdrew the Bill, promising at the same time to give facilities in the next Session for any private Member's Bill which might be introduced for that purpose.

I was pilloried in the Press by Mr. Bernard Shaw for being "guilty not only of gross partiality but of concealing his *coup de main* from the Government until the last moment, so as to discredit them and defeat the women at one stroke." Now I had not only given a general indication of my view on the Thursday, but I had also informed the Government of my considered views and decision on the Monday morning as soon as I returned to town from Tring. Mr. Gibson Bowles, who posed as a great authority on procedure, wrote to me: "Courtney is very wrong to defend the system of go as you please, for I am sure he knows better. Were that system to prevail over all rule and tradition at all points, procedure would become a mere massacre and confusion, for which even the Queensberry rules of the Ring would blush. . . . You, I rejoice to see, are aware of your power and conscious of the duty of using it when the occasion demands, and, if I may say so, your discretion and method of its use seem to me quite admirable."

The Government programme was now completed and the House adjourned for three weeks whilst the Lords were considering and rejecting the measures which had been so tardily sent up to them.

We met again on the 6th of March and Parliament was prorogued on the following day, thus bringing to an end the longest Session on record, which had lasted almost thirteen months.

Early in January I had received a visit from M. de Briansky, who had been commissioned by the municipality of Moscow to present to the Speaker some mementoes of ~~the~~ Delegation's visit to Russia in the previous year. These consisted of an elaborately enamelled salt-cellar and salver, on which it is the custom in Russia to offer bread and salt to distinguished visitors, and of a huge stuffed bear. The history of the bear was that it had been killed in the neighbourhood of Moscow at the time of the visit of the Delegation, who had seen and admired its gigantic proportions. On behalf of the Delegation, which I had unfortunately been unable to accompany, I accepted these gifts and they are now in the Speaker's House. The bear occupies a prominent place in the entrance hall to the Speaker's House, and shortly after it had been placed there Canon Rawnsley came to pay me a visit. He was so struck by its huge proportions and by the yellow sand which was always laid outside my front door, that he sent me the following lines:

Who enters to the Speaker's door
Must needs be very bold,
But lo—in parable—though poor,
He puts his foot on gold.
And when he climbs the Speaker's stair
By Teuton fears opprest,
Behold the mightiest Russian bear
Will take him to his breast.
Thanks to the Taxidermist's art,
Thanks to the golden grail,
The caller's palpitating heart
Of courage cannot fail.

To myself personally M. de Briansky presented a medal, struck in Russia to commemorate the centenary of the Battle of Borodino (the 8th of September 1813), which I have preserved.

Towards the end of January the Young Turks effected a *coup d'état* in Constantinople, dethroned the Sultan, overthrew his government and set up a new government under Mahmoud Shevket, a fine, soldierly-looking personage, subsequently assassinated, whose acquaintance I had made on the occasion of my visit to Constantinople. It so happened that on the 24th of January Reshid Pasha, introduced to me by my brother, was lunching at the Speaker's House. In the middle of luncheon he was called away to the telephone, and on his return informed us that he had, on the telephone, been offered the post of Foreign Minister in the new Turkish Government, but had declined it. Quick work, and a great contrast to the usual dilatoriness of the Turkish character.

My wife and I spent two week-ends at Lord Rothschild's at Tring, where we met mixed parties of politicians, scientists and public servants. Mr. Balfour, Lord Crewe, Lord Hugh Cecil and Mr. Alfred Lyttelton were amongst the former, while the latter categories included Dr. Budge, the eminent Egyptologist, who has lately retired from his work at the British Museum, Sir Matthew Nathan, at that time Head of the Post Office, Sir Francis Mowatt, formerly the Head of the Treasury, and Sir Donald McKenzie Wallace, at one time foreign editor of *The Times* and author of a standard work on Russia. I also then made the acquaintance of Prince Lichnowski, the recently appointed German Ambassador, who during his short stay in London formed a correct estimate of the political situation in this country, but whose reports and advice were disregarded by his superior

authorities in Berlin. If his advice had been taken, it is very probable that the war would not have occurred.

The fortnight's adjournment in February gave me an opportunity, which I had long desired, of visiting Norway. My old friends Sir Mansfeldt and Lady Findlay had invited me to visit them at Christiania, and, my wife and daughter having left for a visit to Argentina and Chile, I took advantage of this brief interval in Parliamentary duties to enjoy some of the delights of Norway in winter and see a Capital city which I had never before visited. Prohibition was strictly in force in Christiania, and I was somewhat astonished, on strolling out the first afternoon that I was there, to meet two men who were both decidedly the worse for drink. The next people that I met were two Queens who were out for a walk, unaccompanied by any ladies-in-waiting or gentlemen in attendance, viz. the Queen of Norway and the Queen of Denmark. A few days later I had the honour of lunching with the King and Queen of Norway at their country residence at Holmenkollen, not far from the Capital, and of making the acquaintance of Prince Olaf.

The Norwegians are very fond of sliding down the steep country roads on sledges which are, I believe, called Kjaelke, assisting themselves in their progression and steering by means of a pole. As I was strolling about on the hillside with the King, we met a fat, elderly lady dressed in breeches and gaiters and a jumper, who was in difficulties and unable to proceed. The King promptly came to her assistance and, inviting the lady to remain on her Kjaelke, pushed her a long way down the hill by means of her pole and gave her a good "send off."

I attended a meeting of the Storthing and was introduced to many of the Ministers. I could not of course understand a word of the proceedings, but they appeared

to be conducted in a businesslike manner. They have a curious institution in Norway, by which, at a general election, two members are returned for each single member constituency, but only one sits in the Assembly. If, however, the sitting member dies, is ill or absent for any time, the substitute takes his place. This ensures every constituency being represented and avoids the necessity of by-elections. The Prime Minister told me that on one occasion, before he became Prime Minister, he had been obliged to be absent for several months, and his substitute, a lady, had taken his place. She had made hay while the sun shone and addressed the Storthing on every possible occasion and at great length. On his return he received a great ovation, but soon realized that his sudden popularity was to be attributed less to his own merits than to the unpopularity of his substitute.

I also met Nansen on several occasions and went to luncheon at his house. He is a familiar figure in London, where he has frequently lectured on his explorations and appealed for funds on behalf of the famine-stricken districts of Russia.

My hosts were kind enough to invite many of the leading personalities of Christiania society to dinners at the Legation and gave me an opportunity of making their acquaintance. After a very pleasant stay I returned to London, crossing the Baltic at night by the train ferry from Trelleborg to Sassnitz and, having an hour or two to spend at Hamburg, I visited Hagenbeck's celebrated zoological garden, where the animals are not kept in cages as with us, but in the open, only a broad ditch separating them from the spectators. This system, which has been to some extent adopted in the Mappin terraces at the Zoo, permits of the animals being well seen, but the painted scenery in which they are shown at

Hamburg struck me as tawdry and somewhat marring the general effect.

On Friday, the 7th of March, Parliament was formally prorogued, and on the following day the Prime Minister gave his usual official dinner on the eve of a new Session. According to custom I sat on the right of the Prime Minister and had the mover of the Address, Mr. Godfrey Collins, on the other side of me. Mrs. Asquith and Miss Asquith broke the usual tradition of treating the function as one entirely for men by joining the party directly after dinner. One of the chief subjects of conversation was the outrageous pitch to which the behaviour of the militant Suffragettes had now reached, and in connection therewith the story was told of an extremist who said, "We have tried pacific and we have tried militant methods. Now we shall appeal to God and SHE will help us."

When the opening of Parliament took place on the Monday following, some of the militants tried to mob the Royal carriage, but with no success. The ceremony took place as usual. I noticed that for the first time the King wore his crown, which had generally on these occasions been borne on a cushion by one of the great officers of State. A slight alteration in the proceedings was for the first time introduced, at His Majesty's suggestion, and was a decided improvement. In the past the King had not instructed Black Rod to summon the Commons to the House of Lords' Chamber until he had taken his seat on the throne. This necessitated a long interval during which Black Rod proceeded to the Commons, delivered the message and returned with the Speaker and the Commons. In order to avoid this long pause it was arranged that Black Rod should be despatched to deliver his message before the King left the Robing Room, and

in this way some time was saved and the awkward interval considerably abbreviated. This arrangement has been found to work well and is now always adopted.

In the Commons I read the King's Speech as usual, and had occasion to clear up a point which is sometimes in doubt. Ought Members to remain covered or to take off their hats when the King's Speech is read by the Speaker? The answer is that they should remain covered. It is only a copy of the speech, which is being read by Mr. Speaker, a second-hand affair, so to speak. If, however, the King should send a special message to the House, as occasionally happens, e.g. when the Vice-Chamberlain appears in uniform with a message of thanks from the King for the Address, then Members should uncover. The action of uncovering has now largely lost its effect in the House, because most of the Members at the present day are already uncovered, having left their hats in the cloak-room.

The Address only took four days, but the necessity of getting the usual financial business through before the end of March compelled the adoption of a drastic time-table, and the intervention of Easter on the 23rd of March still further curtailed the time available for discussion.

The House sat on Easter Monday, but I was unfortunately unable to be present. I had been driving my son Arthur down to Suffolk for the briefest of holidays, the car had not been running well and had stopped, and in endeavouring to wind it up I injured my wrist through a back-fire. This happened at Chelmsford and I was in doubt whether to go on to Suffolk or to return to town. I did the wrong thing and went on, believing that I was only suffering from a severe sprain. However, the pain increased so much that I had to return to town, when the X-rays revealed a break of one of the wrist bones. Sir

Anthony Bowlby set the bone for me, but for many days I was in severe pain and for five weeks was unable to write with my right hand, so that I had to train my left hand to do the necessary.

It was at this period that rumour was rife that some prominent Ministers had been engaged in dealing on the Stock Exchange in Marconi shares; the subject was frequently raised at question time, but as a committee of the House was then sitting to enquire into the system of "Wireless" best adapted to the country's needs, the matter was left to them to be investigated. What happened later will be told in its proper place.

The activities of the militant Suffragettes had now reached the stage at which nothing was safe from their attacks. Churches were burnt, public buildings and private residences were destroyed, bombs were exploded, the police and individuals were assaulted, meetings broken up, and every imaginable device resorted to in order to inconvenience or annoy His Majesty's lieges. When any offenders were caught and convicted they were sent to prison; but as they generally resorted to a hunger strike, and as there was a feeling against allowing the law to take its course, which would have resulted in death, they were released and immediately repeated their former offences. A Bill was introduced, called the Prisoners' Temporary Release Bill, soon nicknamed the "Cat and Mouse Bill," the purport of which was to permit the release of offenders on licence, with a provision that in the event of a subsequent offence being committed the licence should be cancelled and the offenders re-arrested. The Bill passed without much difficulty, but proved valueless in preventing a continuance of the outrages. The feeling in the House, caused by the extravagant and lawless action of the militants, hardened

the opposition to their demands, with the result that on the 6th of May the private Member's Bill, for which the Government had in the previous Session promised facilities, was rejected on second reading by a majority of 47.

So far as the House of Commons was concerned, an amusing incident occurred when a number of the militant Suffragettes having chartered a steam launch and got it moored close to the terrace, addressed the Members, who happened to be indulging in five o'clock tea there, and showered upon them cards of invitation to an afternoon party, purporting to come from myself. The invitation cards were gilt-edged and elaborately got up, with the Royal Arms at the top and inscribed as follows:

The Speaker of the House of Commons
requests the pleasure of the company of the
President, Executive Committee and Members
of the Women's Freedom League
at Tea in the
Garden of the Speaker's Residence, House of Commons,
on Tuesday, July 22nd, at 6 p.m.
Music and Speeches. R.S.V.P.

On this I will only observe that the Speaker is not entitled to use the Royal Arms and that there is no such place as the garden of the Speaker's residence.

On another occasion, whilst Mr. Asquith was addressing the House on the second reading of the Finance Bill, a man in the Strangers' Gallery threw a bag of flour at him. The missile missed the Prime Minister and burst on the steps of the Speaker's chair, but did no harm to anybody beyond making a great mess. If Sir Courtenay Ilbert had happened to have been in his seat at the table, it might just have hit him full in the face. The same individual threw some leaflets into the House headed

"Grace before Meat," and with a picture representing Mr. McKenna forcibly feeding a woman in prison dress bound to a chair and with the following lines below the drawing:

Observe how we treat every case
With the chivalrous tact of our race,
How before we proceed
To forcibly feed,
We never omit to say grace.

One Monday morning a woman was discovered by the police hidden in a cupboard in a lobby of the House. She was as black as a chimney-sweep and in an exhausted condition. It appeared that she had by some means secreted herself on the roof and obtained entrance to a flue, from which hunger had at last compelled her to escape. What she had hoped to do there or how her action could assist her cause are unsolved mysteries. She only succeeded in making herself very uncomfortable and somewhat ridiculous.

A few weeks later a man named Washington fired off a pistol in the Gallery, but not being loaded with ball or any lethal missile, we were none of us any the worse.

In the meanwhile the Home Rule and Welsh Disestablishment Bills passed their second readings and subsequent stages under the guillotine process, and went up to the Lords, where they were again rejected. A story went the rounds that the wife of a Labour M.P. who was visiting the House for the first time, on espying the mace lying on the table, enquired if that was the guillotine of which she had heard so much.

The debates on the Home Rule and Disestablishment Bills were quiet, not to say dull, but on the interim report of the Marconi Committee we had a very interesting and animated evening. The report had revealed

that the Attorney-General, Sir Rufus Isaacs, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Lloyd George, had been investing in shares of the American Marconi Company before their issue to the public, and that at a later stage Lord Elibank, on behalf of the Liberal Party funds, had made similar investments. The Opposition, whilst not making any charges of corruption or dishonesty against Ministers, held the view that the report of the Committee was of a "whitewashing" character and that Ministers should not have mixed themselves up with transactions which might bring their private interests into conflict with public interests. The case was admirably put by Mr. Cave in a clear, moderate and convincing manner, and when he sat down he had, I believe, gained the general assent of the House to his view. Lord Helmsley, the seconder of the motion proposed by Mr. Cave, spoilt the effect produced by the mover, in going over the whole ground again in a far less effective manner, and occupied a great deal of time in the process. He managed not only to antagonize the House, but also to allow to the Attorney-General plenty of time to prepare his reply, of which he availed himself effectually. There was a long debate in which most of the protagonists took part, and in the end an amendment was adopted, moved by Mr. Ryland Atkins, which seemed to acquit Ministers and to censure those (outside the House) who had brought charges of corruption.

I do not believe that this was the real view of the House, which, whilst fully accepting the disclaimer of Ministers of having acted improperly in any way, would have desired to place on record its disapproval of their action.

Amongst those who took part in the debate was Mr. Alfred Lyttelton. It was his last speech, for soon after

this he succumbed under an operation, necessitated by an internal injury, which had been aggravated by the exertions he had made in a cricket match in which he had scored a large number of runs. He had been very pleased with his performance at the age of fifty-six and told me that his eyesight was as good as ever and that he could see the ball "as big as a football." The last time I saw him was at an official dinner at the Foreign Office, given in honour of President Poincaré, but he was then feeling so ill that he was compelled to leave in the middle of the entertainment. I had known Mr. Alfred Lyttelton at Eton and Cambridge, where we were contemporaries, and had seen something of him at the Bar and a good deal of him in the House of Commons and in society. He was one of the first party of guests whom we entertained at Campsea Ashe. His charming, breezy manner, his great proficiency in games and sports of all kinds, his courtesy and moderation in debate and his high spirits had endeared him to all. One of the most striking tributes paid to his memory was when, in a cricket match at Lords on the day of his funeral, play was suspended for a few moments, whilst the thoughts of all were turned to recollections of the favourite, whom they had lost. Mr. Asquith never made a more impressive or more touching speech than that which he delivered to the House on the 7th of July, in paying a tribute to his brother-in-law. Mr. Bonar Law on this occasion was not so happy, and introduced some controversial matter, which was unfortunate.

On the 24th of June His Majesty honoured my wife and myself with an invitation to the banquet at Buckingham Palace, given in honour of President Poincaré. The banquet was a magnificent spectacle; the guests, who numbered eighty-two, were seated at

fourteen tables, and all the gold plate was resplendent on the sideboards. After dinner I had some conversation with the President. Our talk turned upon the differences of procedure in the English and French Chambers and on the grouping of parties. He left upon me the impression of being a determined, possibly obstinate, man without the frills and lightness of touch usually characteristic of the French.

The later stages of the Mental Deficiency Bill kept me in the chair for some very late sittings towards the end of the Session. Mr. Josiah Wedgwood was a bitter opponent of the Bill, but he was almost alone in his opposition. He managed, however, to put down a great many amendments and to argue them with wonderful ability and pertinacity and, although unsuccessful in the result, established his position as a very skilful and capable Parliamentarian.

The Session came to an end on the 15th of August and Parliament was prorogued. The autumn holiday had been well earned, for we had been in almost continuous session since February of the preceding year—eighteen months.

One event of interest in which I was personally concerned, besides those already mentioned, was the centenary dinner of Grillion's Club on the 30th of May, over which I was asked to preside. Our Secretary, Lord Sanderson, wrote to me beforehand: "The rule of Grillion's Club is, No Toasts, No Speeches. It was observed at the Jubilee dinner in 1863, and I think everyone would prefer the same course on this occasion. If it were thought right to propose the health of the Club (I believe its motto is *Esto Perpetua*) I think the toast should be put from the chair without a speech." As matters turned out, however, it was eventually

decided otherwise, and in giving the toast of the Club I was called upon to say a few words, in which I referred to its long past and our warm wishes for its future.

I had also an unusual experience in having my sight tested for colour-blindness at the Imperial College of Science and Technology. I had obtained permission to attend the examination of Captains of the Merchant Service, who were appealing against decisions given against them, on application for the renewal of their certificates, on the ground of their colour-blindness. A mechanical arrangement had been installed in a dark room by which three small lights, white, green and red, could be shown at some little distance, resembling the distant lights of a ship at night. These could be operated so as to vary the colours and to be seen singly or together. Several of the competitors failed to name the correct colours, but on my submitting myself to the test, I found no difficulty and was passed as sound. The late Lord Rayleigh was very fond of applying tests for colour-blindness to his visitors at Terling, but he generally employed either different coloured cards or pieces of worsted, which they were invited to match. He discovered that quite a considerable proportion of his friends were suffering from the defect, but it seemed a doubtful pleasure to give them.

In September I was invited to unveil a memorial bronze medallion in Carlisle Cathedral, placed there in honour of Sir James Graham. It seemed remarkable that although Graham was a Cumberland statesman of great repute in the county and had for many years played a leading part in affairs of State as First Lord of the Admiralty, Home Secretary, and in other posts, no memorial of him had until this time been erected in his native county. It may be that as, during his long

political career, he had belonged to all parties, it did not seem incumbent on any one of them to take the initiative in the matter. However, the omission was now remedied and the medallion in his honour was duly erected and unveiled. Many of his descendants, including his grandson Sir Richard Graham of Netherby and Lady Cynthia, and Lord and Lady Helmsley, were present, and, besides myself, Mr. Henry C. Howard of Greystoke (the chief representative in the county of the old Whig Party), Sir Robert Allison (the late Liberal Member for Carlisle), and Mr. F. Chance (the then Member) made speeches suitable to the occasion.

Another interesting ceremony in which I took a leading part was the opening to the public of Queen Adelaide Hill, recently acquired by the National Trust. This low hill, situated about half-way along the eastern shore of Windermere, commands a splendid view in all directions and more especially towards the northern end of the lake, where there is a fine panorama of some of the chief mountains of the Lake district, such as the Langdale Pikes, Coniston Old Man, Scawfell and High Street. To the south an extensive view is obtained of the lake and its surrounding hills. The place derives its name from the fact that Queen Adelaide, widow of King William IV, once visited it when making a tour of the Lake district. Royal visitors rarely come to the Lakes and the visit of Queen Adelaide had evidently been an important event, commemorated by her name being linked with this lovely spot.

I was invited at a later date to attend the Colchester Oyster Feast given by the Mayor to some 350 guests, who are said on this occasion to have consumed 12,500 oysters, which works out, unless my arithmetic is at fault, at nearly three dozen per head. Speeches occupied

more time than the consumption of oysters, and it fell to my lot to return thanks for the toast of the House of Commons. As the *Westminster Gazette*, not always a very friendly critic, described my effort as "a valuable and charming speech," I would fain hope that it gave satisfaction.

On the 12th of December I was a guest at the Cymmrodorion dinner, over which my old friend and former colleague in the House, Lord Pontypridd, presided. In returning thanks for the toast of my health I referred to some of my predecessors who had been Welshmen, and told the company how Queen Elizabeth had written to Speaker Puckerry, a Welshman, instructing him that no laws were to be passed, "there being many more already than can be well executed." I also related the quarrel between the last Welsh Speaker, Sir John Trevor, and Tillotson, the Archbishop of Canterbury of the day, in which the former was reported to have said, "I hate a fanatic in lawn sleeves," and the latter to have replied, "And I a knave in any sleeves."

CHAPTER XXIV

1914

Exclusion of Ulster Debates—Excited Scenes in the Commons—Lord Rayleigh's Portrait—Death of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain—Troubles in Ulster—Buckingham Palace Conference—War Declared—Home Rule Bill passed—Disaster in Campsea Ashe Hospital.

1914

The year 1914, which was destined to witness events of supreme magnitude and importance, began in the domestic circle with an amateur performance of the comedy of "Jack Straw," in which all the members of the family, with the assistance of a few friends in the neighbourhood, took part. My services were also commandeered, and I played the small part of a distinguished foreign ambassador. My daughter-in-law, who before her marriage had achieved some success on the stage, took charge of the performance as stage manager and played the part of the leading lady with much *éclat*. The squash racquet court made a capital theatre and, as they say of amateur performances, "all went well on the night."

In Ireland there was growing anxiety as to the prospects of preserving peace, which was not diminished when Parliament met on the 10th of February, and the debates on the exclusion of Ulster from the Home Rule Bill were renewed. It was at once evident that although both Sir E. Carson and Mr. Redmond spoke cryptically of the possibility of arrangements, no real progress in that direction had been made. The "clean

cut" and other surgical metaphors were often heard, but Mr. Redmond's principle of Ireland as a whole entity still held the Liberal field. Debates became very animated. Mr. Devlin was often very provocative, and Mr. Bonar Law threatening, whilst the Government gave no indication of any concession. Mutual suspicions intensified the heat, always engendered by an Irish discussion. The Government suspected the Opposition of planning an immediate outbreak of civil war. The Opposition suspected the Government of planning the seizure of Belfast and the Headquarters of the Ulster party. The Nationalists suspected the *bona fides* of the Government and alike of the Opposition. In the midst of this inflammable atmosphere came the resignation of a number of officers at the Curragh after an interview with Sir Arthur Paget, the sudden diversion of a squadron of the Fleet to Lamlash Bay, the resignation of the Minister for War, Mr. J. Seely, following upon his alteration of a letter agreed upon by the rest of the Cabinet, the resignations from the Army Council of Sir John French and Sir J. Ewart, and the assumption by Mr. Asquith of the Secretaryship for War in addition to his duties as Prime Minister. All these kaleidoscopic revolutions in a situation already delicate, naturally found their reflection in the House of Commons. Questions poured in in scores, supplementary questions in dozens, excited scenes followed each other almost daily, and offensive interruptions became common; before the motion for the adjournment for the Easter holidays came on, the supporters of the Government handed in 160 blocking notices, the effect of which was, according to the rules then in force, to prevent the discussion of the 160 subjects to which those blocking notices referred.

This practice was recognized to be such a gross violation of the rule, commonly called the rule against anticipation, that after Easter the procedure was altered; and by a new Standing Order, then passed, discretion was given to the Speaker to ignore the blocking notice, if in his opinion the subject referred to therein was not likely to be reached in the ordinary course. In this way the opportunity for discussing questions of importance on motions for adjournment was preserved to the House.

One night, when we were in the middle of an excited debate and feeling was running very high, not only in the House itself but in my wife's gallery, where some altercations had taken place between Lady Londonderry and Miss Asquith, I received a pressing appeal from Mrs. Asquith to keep order amongst the ladies admitted to that sanctum. This duty generally fell to my wife, but she was abroad, in Madeira, at the time, and so I scribbled the following reply:

"Dear Mrs. Asquith, I have as much as I can manage in keeping order amongst the devils below, without having to control the angels above."

This incident and my note were afterwards appropriated (without acknowledgment) by Mrs. Humphry Ward, and introduced into one of her later novels.

One afternoon, just at the time when the Ulstermen were particularly irate at what they termed "the plot" of sending a squadron to patrol the northern parts of the Irish Channel, no less than ninety questions to the Prime Minister appeared upon the paper. I did not know which to admire most, the ingenuity and inventiveness of the questions or the imperturbability and nonchalance of the Prime Minister in replying to as many of them as time permitted. But after-

a day or two of this "barrage" of questions, Mr. Asquith announced that he would not reply to any further questions on the topic and the attack died down.

I ought to explain that the services of the Navy had been called upon in consequence of the reported landing of 35,000 rifles along the Irish coast in the neighbourhood of Belfast. The Opposition demanded an enquiry into the alleged arrangements made by the Government for landing troops in Ulster and blockading the coast. They were offered a day for a vote of censure, which was accordingly moved in an excited and angry House. Mr. Churchill did not improve matters or help to maintain order by describing the motion as "a vote of censure on the police by the criminal classes," an expression which, however clever, was more calculated to arouse than to allay feeling. My task in trying to preserve some semblance of decency and order in these successive scenes of tumult and invective was not easy, but I was greatly assisted by the calm and dignified way in which Mr. Asquith presented the Government case from time to time, though some of his colleagues did not see fit to follow his example.

On the 12th of May the Prime Minister moved a resolution closuring the proceedings on the Home Rule and Welsh Church Bills, which were being taken under the Parliament Act, but for a time the opposition to the former measure was slightly relieved by the Prime Minister's promise to introduce an amending Bill, the effect of which would be to postpone for six years the operation of the Act in the Ulster counties.

The respite from "scenes" was, however, of only brief duration, for on the 21st of May, when the Home

Rule Bill was again before the House, Mr. Campbell, one of the protagonists of the Irish Loyalists, who rose from the front Opposition bench to discuss it, was received with loud clamour by his own supporters, and with persistent cries of "Adjourn! Adjourn!" This demonstration had been recommended, I believe, by the *Observer* on the previous Sunday. Whether it had been deliberately organized or not, I cannot say, but, at the time, it appeared as though this were the fact. I did my best to quell the disturbance and made repeated appeals to the Opposition for quiet, but could obtain no response beyond renewed cries of "Adjourn! Adjourn!" I then turned to Mr. Bonar Law and asked him whether it was with his consent and approval that this demonstration was being made. Mr. Bonar Law replied: "I will not criticize what you consider to be your duty in asking the question, but I know mine and that is not to answer it." I must confess that I was completely taken aback by this unexpected reply and rather hurt, for I had hitherto seldom appealed to leaders on either front bench without receiving their support. However, as it was then obvious that no reasonable discussion could be hoped for, I announced that in my judgment a grave state of disorder had arisen and adjourned the House.

The week-end, which intervened before the debates on the Home Rule Bill were resumed, gave an opportunity for me and Mr. Bonar Law to meet, and as the result of our discussion mutual explanations were offered on the Monday. I did not hesitate to apologize for asking a question which he conceived was a reflection on his leadership and a censure upon his conduct. It was certainly not in that sense that I had addressed him, and I made a blunder in putting what appeared

to be an intimate question of domestic policy. I had intended no more than an appeal to him to restrain his followers, who I believed were acting otherwise than with his assent and approval. I then understood, what I do not think I had previously grasped, namely, that the Opposition had expected the debate to begin with a further statement from the Prime Minister as to the Government's intentions with regard to the amending Bill. As this was now forthcoming, and as Mr. Bonar Law and I had made up our differences, the debate proceeded with as much harmony as Irish debates were accustomed to show.

The brief Whitsun holiday came as a welcome relief from the tension and trials of the Session. My wife and I spent it at Campsea Ashe, where we had a large Red Cross County Demonstration and Competition, little dreaming that within ten weeks' time the organization would be put to the test of actual service. Major Pinney, the County organizer, had made the arrangements, which left nothing to be desired and worked smoothly. When the war broke out he was called to active service and handed over the post to Mr. Maitland Wilson. Before twelve months were out he fell, an early and much regretted victim of the war.

Time also permitted us to pay a brief visit to Lord and Lady Ilchester at Melbury (my chief recollections of which are wonderful thickets of lilacs and much lawn tennis in a walled garden), and to Lord and Lady Rayleigh at Terling, where we inspected his large herd of dairy cows, which supplied his numerous milkshops in London. *Àpropos* of this side of the great scientist's activities, he told me an amusing story. He was one day standing near the picture painted of him by Sir James Reid, the President of the Scottish Academy,

which was then being exhibited at one of the London galleries, and overheard two ladies discussing it. After some criticism this conversation ensued:

QUESTION: Who is that?

ANSWER: The catalogue says Lord Rayleigh.

QUESTION: Who is Lord Rayleigh?

ANSWER: Lord Rayleigh? Why, he is the milkman.

Correct no doubt so far as it goes, but hardly a complete description of this very remarkable and lovable man.

During this Whitsun recess my wife and I lost an old acquaintance and friend in Sir William Anson. He was a distant cousin of my wife's, and had in early days been a neighbour in Kent of Mr. Beresford Hope's home at Bedgebury. I had known him since 1880, when he was a barrister on the North-Eastern Circuit and was in chambers at 3 King's Bench Walk with Edward Ridley. His father was killed in a railway accident at Wigan when the Scotch Express at full speed was diverted from the main line into a siding. There was a lawsuit against the L. & N.W. Railway in which E. Ridley was counsel for Anson, who recovered heavy damages. Sir William entered political life rather late, took office in 1900 as Secretary to the Board of Education, and remained in Parliament as Member for Oxford University until his death. He had a charming personality, was well read, a great authority on the Constitution (on which subject he wrote a book which has become a standard work), fond of society and had a well-developed sense of humour. I think he felt more at home in the academic than in the political world. Oxford was more to him than St. Stephen's. Nature had not equipped him with a resonant voice,

and being without that organ he failed to impose himself upon the House to the degree which his wide knowledge and literary gifts justified. As Warden of All Souls he offered the hospitality of his lodge to a wide circle of friends, who were captivated with his attentions and charmed with his precise enunciation of English. When the Prince of Wales was an undergraduate at Oxford, Sir William was chosen to give him instruction in the practice of the Law and Constitution of his country, and no better guide could have been selected.

Sir Herbert Warren, in writing to me some years later about Sir William, said: "He was one of those who left everything he touched better than he found it, and this was pre-eminently true of All Souls, the creation of a statesman and an artist in academic craft."

When the House resumed after the Whitsun recess, the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Lloyd George) found himself in some difficulties with regard to some of the proposals in his Finance Bill relating to grants to local authorities. The point was this. The Finance Bill proposed to raise funds for the purpose of their distribution as grants to local authorities in aid of rates, the amounts and the nature of such grants not being specified but being left for future allocation in some future Bill. I had some private interviews with him, the Attorney-General (Sir John Simon) and Mr. Samuel, but I held, according to the precedents, that fresh resolutions in Committee of Ways and Means would be required, and was unfortunately unable, owing to these technical difficulties, to fall in with their view, and the proposals had to be dropped.

On Sunday, the 28th of June, we were staying at Balls Park near Hertford with a large party as the

guests of Sir George and Lady Faudel Phillips. In the middle of dinner Mr. Harry Lawson (now Lord Burnham) was summoned to the telephone, and returned with the news of the murder of the Archduke Ferdinand of Austria and his consort at Serajevo. The news was startling, and its importance was at once recognized by the party, though we little foresaw to what terrible and earth-shaking events it would eventually lead.

In Parliament the first half of the month of July was occupied by discussions on the Finance Bill, supply and routine business. The death of Mr. J. Chamberlain, who had long been ill, was marked by an adjournment out of respect to his memory, preceded by speeches from the leaders of the various parties in tribute to the memory of this great Parliamentary figure. When I first entered the House in 1883 there was no man more disliked or distrusted by the Conservative Party than he, but as time went on there was none who became more influential in the party councils or more popular as a debater. He was an incisive and clear speaker, going straight to the point and sticking to it, vigorous in attack, courageous at all times and inspiring in his wide views of Imperial unity; he was well described by Mr. Bonar Law as "a great fighter and a great friend." I was well acquainted with him personally, though not intimate, and had a high respect for his character, though doubtful of the wisdom of his fiscal policy.

On the 14th of July we entertained at luncheon Slatin Bey, whose wonderful adventures in the Soudan, when a prisoner for many years in the hands of the Mahdi after the death of Gordon, are well known, and on the following day we had a large dinner party and

ball at the Speaker's House. It was attended by a great many young officers, almost all of whom fell in the war before two months were passed. This, as it turned out, was the last of a long series of entertainments, parties, balls and what not which we had, during the first nine years of my Speakership, been privileged to give, but it dwells in my memory more than all the rest by reason of its tragic sequel.

In the meanwhile matters in Ireland had been going from bad to worse. There was no doubt that in Ulster thousands were being drilled in military movements and organized into companies, battalions and all the intricate machinery of an army. The example set by Ulster was being followed on the other side in other parts of Ireland. As the time approached for the rejection by the Lords of the Home Rule Bill, and for the operation of the Parliament Act, anxiety was becoming more intense and the fear of an outbreak of hostilities more insistent. On the 20th of July the political world was startled by an announcement made by Mr. Asquith in the Commons that His Majesty had summoned a conference at Buckingham Palace, which was to sit on the following day. It did not come as a surprise to me, for the King had been pleased to communicate his intention to me a few days previously and had invited me to act as chairman. The members of the Conference were Mr. Asquith and Mr. Lloyd George on behalf of the Government, Mr. Bonar Law and Lord Lansdowne for the Opposition, Mr. Redmond and Mr. Dillon for the Nationalists, and Sir E. Carson and Mr. J. Craig for the Ulstermen.

We met at Buckingham Palace and sat in a large room on the ground floor, overlooking the garden. His Majesty opened the proceedings with a speech in which

he referred to it as "a new departure" and offered his sincerest hopes for a successful issue. When the King left, I took the chair. We sat for four mornings in succession. As the course of our proceedings has been recently referred to in public, I am not divulging any secrets when I say that our attention was concentrated upon the possibility of drawing a suitable frontier line between Ulster and the rest of Ireland. Starting with the assumption, accepted temporarily by Mr. Redmond and Mr. Dillon, that it was desirable to draw such a line, we examined the statistics of the population, particularly in the counties of Tyrone and Fermanagh, maps showing the boundaries of parishes, Poor Law unions, baronies, and every conceivable Local Government unit. The difficulty of separating the Protestant and Roman Catholic populations, however, appeared insuperable. We found large pockets of Catholics in the midst of a Protestant community, and *vice versâ*. I think we all came to the conclusion that the only line which would separate them was a line to be drawn along the contour lines of height above sea level, the Protestant population being situated below and the Catholic population above a certain line of altitude. As such a line was impossible for the division of administrative areas, we could get no further. The question which occupied us is, as I write, the question occupying the attention of the Delimitation Commission now sitting. May their deliberations have a happier issue than ours!

When we found that we were not in sight of achieving any result, Mr. Asquith turned to me and asked if I had any solution to offer. I made a suggestion that the two counties should be included either in the North or the South, and should, after an interval of say three or five years, be called upon by a plebiscite to decide

whether they wished to remain where they were or to be transferred. And then a remarkable thing happened. Just as I had finished speaking, a letter was brought in to me marked "Very urgent." It was from Lord Macdonnell, who had been permanent Under Secretary for Ireland from 1902 to 1908, and contained identically the same proposal as that which I was then submitting to the Conference. I read Lord Macdonnell's letter aloud. Sir E. Carson observed that the coincidence was suspicious. As a matter of fact, I had not had any previous communication with Lord Macdonnell, with whom I was personally unacquainted. At all events my proposal was not approved by either party and the Conference broke down. His Majesty received us separately and in bidding us farewell expressed his great regrets at the failure. Whilst I was waiting in an adjoining room, in company with Lord Lansdowne and Mr. Bonar Law, I happened to pick up *The Times*; and there saw the telegram, announcing the ultimatum sent by Austria to Serbia. I called the attention of my companions to this very serious news, which, as our Conference had sat early, they had not seen previously, and we agreed that it portended some very grave events, how grave we did not then realize. After leaving the Palace I wrote out a brief report of our proceedings, which later in the day Mr. Asquith, in announcing the breakdown of the Conference, read out to the House. One of the drawbacks to the Conference, which militated against its success, was that, although the representatives of the Liberal and Unionist Parties were fully qualified to come to an agreement on behalf of their respective parties, neither the Nationalist nor the Ulster representatives considered themselves authorized to come to any determination without

further consultation with those whom they represented —in other words, they were not fully accredited ambassadors with full powers. On more than one occasion when I had been fortunate enough to secure in my library the meeting of Mr. Redmond and Sir Edward Carson, the same difficulty had presented itself. I am convinced that if these gentlemen had had full power to act, the points then at issue might have been amicably arranged. I also felt at that time pretty confident that if His Majesty's Government had put its foot down firmly, decided what it thought to be right, braved any adverse criticism or action in Ireland and appealed to the mass of moderate feeling in England for support, this support would have been forthcoming. The British public was sick of the prolonged controversy and inclined to exclaim, "A plague o' both your Houses!" In their anxiety for a settlement the people would have swallowed a good deal they did not like and heaved a sigh of relief.

At the end of this eventful week my wife and I went to Campsea Ashe, where we entertained a week-end party consisting of Lord and Lady Londonderry, Mr. Bonar Law and Miss Law, Lord and Lady Newton, Sir Frank Swetenham, Mrs. Rupert Beckett, Captain Packe, Mr. Arnold Ward, and my son and his wife. Golf and Bridge occupied the time not devoted to a discussion of the European situation.

The following week was occupied by the House in the consideration of several Bills of secondary importance, but everybody's mind was concentrated on events abroad, where the horizon was daily becoming blacker. The Ulstermen and their supporters, inside and outside the House, foregathered in large numbers on Thursday the 30th, as it was expected that the promised

"amending" Bill would be discussed. But "when they got there the cupboard was bare," for the Government, in view of the national situation, postponed the Bill, and, unfortunately, thereby left the Ulstermen under the feeling that they had once again been tricked.

On Tuesday, the 28th of July, war was declared between Austria and Serbia; there was a panic on the foreign Bourses and on the Friday the Stock Exchange was closed. On that day the House disposed of its allotted business, and I went down to Campsea Ashe by an afternoon train. The first signs of impending danger which I observed were detachments of troops guarding the bridges and tunnel on the Great Eastern Railway. The declaration of war between Russia and Germany was imminent. It took place on the following day. We had a large party in the house for the week-end, and a great gathering of Suffolk Boy Scouts in the neighbouring park of Rendlesham. In view of the threatening situation, however, my party dispersed and the Boy Scouts' camp was broken up. I returned to town on the Sunday night, and found the train and the stations at which it stopped crowded with Naval reservists hurrying off to their appointed *rendezvous*. On my arrival in London I found a letter from Mr. Percy Illingworth, the Chief Government Whip, from which I extract the following sentences descriptive of the situation:

"Credit has collapsed and we are practically faced with bankruptcy on a wholesale scale. To meet this situation the Government will introduce a 'Moratorium' Bill. I am even uncertain as to the spelling. But the effect will be that no financial obligations of



any kind need be met for a definite period and thereby time is given to enable people to meet their financial obligations. In order to be effective it is necessary to pass the Bill through all its stages on Monday in both Houses, and to receive the Royal assent. In this way it is hoped that Tuesday morning when banks and business houses reopen (after the August Bank holiday) the critical condition will be substantially relieved. . . . The alteration" (in the business of the House) "of course involves the suspension of several Standing Orders."

On Monday, the 3rd of August, this accordingly happened. All questions were postponed and the Moratorium Bill passed all its stages. There was a very full attendance, and in a hushed House Sir Edward Grey (the Foreign Minister) made one of the most remarkable speeches to which it was ever my fate to listen. The speech is historical and needs no description from me. The tense atmosphere, the supreme importance of the occasion, the doubt as to the future, the fine voice and presence of the speaker, his suppressed but still evident emotion, added to the terrible interest of his description of the situation and in the steps taken by the Government to prepare for the worst. I was forcibly reminded of John Bright's speech on the eve of the Crimean War, when he spoke of the Angel of Death and the fluttering of his wings—almost audible in the House itself. This was certainly the greatest and most thrilling occasion I ever witnessed in the House.

After a speech from Mr. Bonar Law, Mr. Redmond followed, and also made one of the finest of the many fine orations which stand to his credit. Throwing himself whole-heartedly into support of the nation's

cause, his speech created a profound sensation. Mr. Ramsay Macdonald struck a dissonant note, but was listened to in silence.

At 7 o'clock the House was summoned to the Lords to hear the Royal assent to the "Moratorium" Bill which had passed four hours previously, and on our return from that function the debate was resumed, but in a discursive, desultory and deplorable fashion, until a few words from Mr. Balfour of protest against its continuance, brought to a conclusion one of the most notable sittings ever held in the House of Commons.

On the following day the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer further explained the situation, the former narrating in detail the telegrams which had passed between Great Britain, France, Germany and Belgium, and the latter indicating several measures proposed to meet the insurances of war risks. Votes in supply were passed and routine business transacted, but the House rose early to await elsewhere the announcement of the result of the ultimatum to Germany expiring at 11 p.m., which, as is well known, led to the declaration of war at that hour.

The next few days were devoted to passing with lightning rapidity a number of emergency measures required to deal with the pressing events of the moment, as well as a vote of credit of 100 millions, the first of a long series. By Friday the Appropriation Bill had been passed and the Royal assent given to fifty-five measures.

I thought this a suitable moment to attempt to effect an agreement between Sir E. Carson and Mr. Redmond, and we had a meeting in my library, at which the Irish situation was again reviewed in the

light of the national situation; but, although these protagonists were personally on perfectly friendly terms, it soon became apparent that there was no hope of any adjustment of the important differences of principle which divided them, and the meeting was of brief duration.

I was again at home in the country for a week-end, and my wife and I decided to establish a small hospital at Campsea Ashe, the squash racquet court being turned into a ward for patients, and other suitable accommodation for about fifteen or sixteen being provided in the stables and garage adjoining. We began by taking in several patients from St. Thomas's Hospital, in order to set free the wards there for wounded soldiers, but before long the latter began to be sent to us, as they arrived at Ipswich, and for about three years there was a steady stream of men passing through our hospital.

The House rose on Monday, the 10th of August, for a fortnight, on which day I received a telegram from M. de Rodzianko, the President of the Russian Duma, as follows: "La Douma de l'Empire convoquée en session extraordinaire en vue des événements exceptionnels qui traversent le monde civilisé prie la Chambre des Communes de la Grande Bretagne d'agréer son salut chaleureux et sincère au nom des sentiments de profonde amitié qui réunissent nos grandes nations. Toute la Russie a accueilli avec enthousiasme la résolution du peuple anglais de donner son puissant appui aux nations amies dans la lutte historique qui se déroule en cet instant. Que Dieu bénisse les armes des nations amies de la triple entente. Vive Sa Majesté le Roi Georges et sa valeureuse flotte et armée. Vive le parlement anglais. Vive la Grande Grande Bretagne.

Président de la Douma de l'Empire, MICHEL DE RODZIANKO."

To this friendly message I replied, with the aid of the Foreign Office, as follows: "Je m'empresse à vous remercier chaleureusement du télégramme par lequel vous avez bien voulu me faire parvenir les sentiments d'amitié que la Douma de l'Empire vient d'exprimer à l'égard de la Chambre des Communes. Dès l'ouverture de la Chambre vers la fin du mois je ne manquerai pas de leur faire part de cette gracieuse manifestation de la cordialité des relations qui existent si heureusement entre nos deux pays. LOWTHER."

When the House met, I duly informed it of the interchange of messages and of their contents.

It was during this interval of the Session that, as I have narrated, I sought the advice of the Master of the Rolls as to whether I was or was not entitled to endorse the certificates on the Home Rule and Welsh Church Bills, under the Parliament Act.

During the sittings which took place in the week of the 25th of August, a number of pressing emergency Bills were introduced and passed all their stages very rapidly through both Houses, and the House again adjourned until the 9th of September. My eldest son, Christopher, joined the Westmorland and Cumberland Yeomanry, in which he received a commission, and my second son, Arthur, joined the Suffolk Regiment as a private. He went through some strange and uncomfortable experiences in that capacity, but they were not of long duration, and he also soon received a commission as 2nd Lieutenant in the 2nd Suffolks, and was quartered at Felixstowe. As this town is at no great distance from Campsea Ashe, we were able during his course of training there to see him

frequently until the time came for him to go to the front.

My time was divided between addressing recruiting meetings and attending various Relief Committees which were at once organized in the district, in the anticipation of unemployment and distress arising in the locality, an anticipation which, however, was not realized.

Most unfortunately I fell a victim at this moment to a severe attack of gout, the severest and the longest which I ever experienced. The anxieties of the Parliamentary situation and the shock of receiving the news that my brother Cecil had fallen at Mons—a rumour which, however, proved unfounded—were doubtless the cause of my trouble. At all events, for six weeks I was disabled and for a considerable part of that time was unable to put either foot to the ground.

The House sat from the 9th to the 19th of September, and in addition to passing some emergency matters, was occupied in considering the position of the Home Rule and Welsh Church Bills. The Government had not been able to arrive at any *modus vivendi* with the majority in the Lords, and were determined to pass these Bills under the Parliament Act. They, however, proposed and carried a Bill suspending their operation for a year or longer if necessary, and promised a Bill to amend the Home Rule Bill when passed. The Opposition protested, but in view of the national emergency would not oppose, and walked out. The Lords accepted the situation and returned the Bills through the Clerk of Parliament, Sir Henry Graham, to the Clerk of the House of Commons, Sir Courtenay Ilbert, and on the 17th of September the two Bills were brought down to me by Mr. Ferguson Davie, the

Head of the Public Bill Office, for my certificate to be endorsed upon them. I was still laid up in bed, but as the gout was in my feet and not in my hands, I was able to sign them; and in view of what had occurred, and of the return of the Bills from the Lords to the Commons, I did not feel it my duty to raise any objection.

Two days later, the Bills received the Royal assent under a new formula as being "duly passed under the provisions of the Parliament Act 1911," and thus ended this stage of the great controversy. It left nobody satisfied, for the cup of Home Rule had once again been removed from the lips of the Irish Party, as they were on the very point of tasting its contents: and the Opposition felt that, although temporarily postponed, the principle of Home Rule had been forced upon an electorate which had never accepted and had always rejected it when submitted as a fair and square issue.

During the recess of two months my wife and I remained in Suffolk. We had the pleasure of receiving our old friends Sir Maurice de Bunsen and Sir Edward Goschen, who had come into the limelight on the European stage, the former as our Ambassador at Vienna at the moment of the outbreak of war, and the latter at Berlin. Their accounts of the last moments of their respective missions in the two Capitals and of their adventures on the road home, were deeply interesting, and at the moment novel, but have since then become widely known.

My brother Cecil, who had gone to the front with the Expeditionary Force, in command of the 1st Battalion 1st Scots Guards, 1st Division, 1st Army Corps, and whose death at Mons had been erroneously re-

ported, was all through the retreat from Mons and the Battle of the Marne, but was wounded on the 15th of September at the Battle of the Aisne. A piece of shell made two holes in his chest. The wound was not severe, but incapacitated him for a time and he came to recuperate with us in Suffolk before returning to the front on the 11th of November. Shortly after his return he was appointed a Brigadier-General.

The new Session of Parliament was opened by His Majesty in khaki, and many Peers and Members of Parliament also appeared in Service uniforms. Again a considerable amount of special war legislation was enacted, and a vote of credit for £225,000,000 was passed, entailing a Finance Bill which imposed a mass of fresh taxation. But the discussions on these matters were by general consent abbreviated within the narrowest possible limits, and day after day the House rose quite early. I remember remarking to a friend that "until war came I had not known what peace was." The sittings came to an end on the 27th of November, and the House adjourned until the 3rd of February.

I spent the winter mostly in Suffolk, but went to Cumberland for a brief visit, for a series of recruiting and Red Cross meetings. My wife and I also stayed for a few days with Field Marshal Lord Grenfell, at Overstone, and this gave us an opportunity of seeing our eldest son, Christopher, who was quartered in the neighbourhood, at Northampton.

At this period there was some fear of a possible invasion of the Suffolk coast, and a committee was established, of which I was a member, to determine the method of evacuation of the civilian population in the event of such an occurrence. We matured our

plans several times, but as a succession of Generals was appointed to the Eastern Command, and as no one of them ever approved the arrangements made by his predecessor, we were kept busy undoing and redoing the work. Just as the war terminated in November 1918, everything was ready, the civilian and the military roads had been duly settled and indicated by notice-boards, and the finishing touches put to the scheme. Fortunately it was never tested by bitter experience.

Almost the last day of the year was marked by a catastrophe to our hospital. On the 28th of December there was a violent gale and a heavy fall of snow. Seventeen trees in the park were blown down, including one very fine cedar, and one tree fell upon the glass roof of the hospital ward at 1 a.m., covering many of the patients with broken glass. It became necessary to move the patients, of whom there were then fifteen, at once into the house, and to provide them with beds or some sort of sleeping accommodation. Some of them had to be carried across and some had to have their cuts and injuries immediately attended to. The violence of the wind and the heavy fall of snow made it a difficult operation; it was no easy task and resulted in my wife catching a severe cold which developed into congestion of the lungs. The barograph had registered a drop of over half an inch in eight hours, and then a sudden rise of an inch in the following twelve hours. The worst part of the storm came with the rise of the barometer. However, in a day or two the roof was repaired and all was again well.

It may be thought by my readers that my account of the great events of this year is very meagre and inadequate. I can only say that I do not pretend to

tell the history of the war or of the vicissitudes through which our country passed. I limit myself to a narration of such matters as were my own concern or affected me personally.

CHAPTER XXV

1915-1916

Sons badly wounded—Visits to France—Zeppelins over Suffolk—Bath—Death of Sir Chandos Leigh—Sir David Erskine resigns—Compulsory Service—First Secret Sitting—Mistaken for a Spy—The Speaker's Conference—Food Controllership—Mr. Lloyd George becomes Prime Minister.

1915

During this year the Session was broken up into six separate groups of sittings, averaging about six weeks each, but during the first half of the year there were no sittings on Fridays, and during the latter half the Monday sittings were also omitted. This arrangement enabled Ministers to devote more time to their office work and gave to unofficial Members the opportunity of attending to local matters in connection with the war, which claimed their attention. Notwithstanding this arrangement, a vast mass of public business of an urgent and highly important character was got through. By tacit agreement speeches were few and short, the debates brief and businesslike, and sittings often closed at the dinner hour. Matters of first class importance, such as the treatment of our prisoners in Germany, the increased cost of living, the internment of enemy aliens, the mobilization of industry, the supply of munitions and the establishment of the Ministry of Munitions, criticism of the Press Bureau, the limitation of coal prices, the curtailment of the opportunities for obtaining alcoholic refreshment, the establishment of a system of registration of the whole

population and the adoption of compulsory service, were mooted, discussed, and decided. There was here work enough for a five years' Parliament, let alone a session. But, besides all these matters, some three or four votes of credit for huge sums were taken, and two Budgets were opened and their proposals embodied in Finance Acts. Bills were also passed limiting the increase of rent and mortgage interest, increasing postal and telegraph rates, postponing the operation of the Welsh Church Disestablishment Act, giving emergency grants to the Universities, dealing with Naval and Military war pensions, extending the prohibitions against trading with the enemy, amending the Defence of the Realm Act and a number of other minor matters. There was also from time to time criticism on the general conduct of the war, and particularly of the operations in the Dardanelles. It will be seen that, whatever else may be said of it, the House of Commons was not open to the charge of idleness or procrastination. It is not within the scheme of this book to deal with any of these matters in detail, and I will only refer to them in so far as they affected me in any way. This was a time when everybody seemed anxious to take over new jobs and leave the work which they were accustomed to do for something novel and more exciting; but being precluded from deserting my post, I conceived that my spare time was best occupied by carrying out local duties in the County of Suffolk, for which the short weekly sittings provided an opportunity. The East Suffolk Relief Committee sat frequently, and I seldom missed a sitting. Assizes, Quarter Sessions, and Petty Sessions took up a certain amount of time, and after the Registration Act came into force I volunteered to assist in carrying out its provisions. My daughter and

I took charge of a district in my neighbourhood and visited every house, distributing and subsequently collecting the registration forms. I was also a member of the County Agricultural Committee and attended some of its meetings. In the absence of the Prince of Wales at the front, I was appointed, together with the Duke of Teck and Lord Iveagh, to act as joint president of King Edward the Seventh's London Hospital Fund, and on several occasions presided at the meeting of the Council.

My wife and I were twice subjected to great anxiety by the news which we received from the front of the dangerous wounding of both our sons. Arthur, the younger, had gone abroad with the 2nd Suffolks in January. On the 1st of May we received news that he had been very dangerously wounded in the trenches, just to the north of Mount Kemmel, at a place called Vierstraat. A bullet struck him behind the left ear and lodged against his spine. We crossed over to Boulogne and arrived just before he was brought in to No. 7 base hospital there. We passed a few days in great anxiety, but on the 10th of May were relieved at the report of the doctors who pronounced him to be then out of danger. Our arrival at the Folkestone Hotel at Boulogne had been rather agitated, for we had hardly got into our rooms when a fire broke out in the lift, and our effects, hastily unpacked, had to be more hastily repacked and carried down. However, the men of Sir Arthur Lawley's Ambulance Detachment, quartered immediately opposite the hotel, very soon got to work and extinguished the fire. This excitement was followed by a somewhat humorous incident. The *sapeurs pompiers* of the town, having arrived after the fire had been subdued, were greeted with jeers by

the Ambulance Corps and retired in high dudgeon. Then M. le Maire, having been apprized of the incident, called upon Sir Arthur Lawley and demanded an apology, threatening that, if the apology were not forthcoming, he would issue an edict cutting off the supplies of drink to the Ambulance Corps. Needless to say that the apology was at once produced.

I returned to town on the 10th of May, crossing over with several officers and men, who were suffering from the effects of the first German gas attack. My wife and daughter returned a week later, and my son was also brought back on the same day. After spending some time in a private hospital he was brought to the Speaker's House, but he made a very slow recovery and about six months later was operated upon and a portion of the bullet was extracted. His convalescence was very protracted, however, and even now, after the lapse of almost ten years, he has not yet wholly recovered the health and spirits which he formerly enjoyed.

On the very day of my son's operation we received bad news of my eldest son Christopher. He had gone to the front with the Westmorland and Cumberland Yeomanry in July, but on the 3rd of September was dangerously wounded by a bit of shell which pierced the lung. I left for Boulogne on the following day, motored to St. Omer and, picking up my brother Cecil, who was on Sir John French's staff at Headquarters, went on with him to Merville, where my son was lying in hospital in a very precarious condition. I stayed with him as long as the doctors would permit, and then returned to St. Omer and dined at the A.D.C. mess with my brother, Colonel Barry, Colonel Dawnay, and Sir F. E. Smith, M.P. Later in the evening Captain Josiah Wedgwood, M.P., and Mr. Robert Harcourt, M.P.,

turned up. They seemed to be engaged in endeavouring to ascertain the feeling of those in authority at the front as to the adoption of compulsory service.

On the following day I again visited the hospital at Merville, which was not far from the front lines, and saw my son, who was making fair progress. From Merville the sound of firing was very audible, and the observation balloons seemed to be only a mile or two away. I returned to London that afternoon. On the 16th of September I received a telegram from Merville to say that my son's condition was very serious and that the doctors doubted if he would live many hours. My wife left at once, but was delayed crossing the Channel owing to mines having been laid which made communication unsafe. However, she eventually arrived at Merville and stayed there for some days, being lodged in the house of a hospitable French family, until my son (after an operation which gave considerable relief) was able to be moved to a base hospital at Calais. My wife then went to Calais also and remained there with him until he was sufficiently recovered to permit of his return to England. My wife unfortunately fell a victim to an attack of blood-poisoning, contracted at Calais, and was laid up for some weeks after her return home.

My brother Gerard's condition at this time also caused us considerable anxiety. His appointment as Ambassador at Constantinople had come to an end in 1913, and he had returned to London, full of the happy expectation of enjoying a well-earned holiday after his many years' service abroad, an expectation doomed, however, to disappointment, for he fell ill, suffered from terrible headaches and gradual loss of mental power, and passed at last into a comatose condition. He had taken a house at Sandwich, in the summer of

this year, and there I visited him occasionally, but I could not fail to mark his gradually decreasing vitality and loss of interest in everything about him. He lingered on until the 5th of April 1915, when he passed peacefully away.

In the autumn of 1915 we were visited in Suffolk by a number of Zeppelin raids at night. On the morning after one of these visits, my gardener picked up in the garden a pink paper with some German letterpress on it. My knowledge of the language enabled me to decipher it, although I could not construe all the technical terms employed. The paper contained the instructions for the manner in which inflammable bombs were to be dropped. In the immediate neighbourhood there was also picked up the cap, which had fallen overboard, of one of the crew of a Zeppelin, and finally on the 12th of August, the house was shaken by three violent explosions caused by bombs dropped from a Zeppelin in passing over the neighbouring town of Woodbridge. Great damage was done on this occasion —a whole street was laid in ruins, eight persons were killed and twenty wounded. It was alleged that the attention of the Zeppelin was called to the town by the bright illumination of a large building in which the military were holding an assault-at-arms, and had omitted to darken the windows. Subsequently we had numerous visits of a similar character in our immediate neighbourhood, but fortunately without similar disastrous results. In a field not far from my house, about seven miles from the coast, was found a small bomb which was examined by experts at the neighbouring aerodrome of Orford, and pronounced to be a signal bomb, which, if it had fallen into the sea, would have shown a bright light. It was probably dropped by the

Zeppelin in order to ascertain whether its position was over land or sea.

During the spring of this year, having again endured a severe attack of gout, I went to seek relief at Bath, and found it. The waters of this well-known city have proved in my case most beneficial, and I have, ever since my first visit there, every cause to be grateful to the treatment obtainable in that ancient health resort. In addition to the curative properties of the waters, Bath is, in my opinion, a delightful town, full of splendid specimens of domestic architecture and historical associations, and the centre of a beautiful neighbourhood. There are many attractive spots within easy reach, such as the picturesque old town of Bradford-on-Avon, the battlefield of Lansdowne, the racecourse from which magnificent views are obtained of the Mendips, the precipitous gorge of Cheddar and its subterranean caves, the ancient ruins of Glastonbury Abbey, the battlefield of Sedgmoor, where the last battle which was ever fought on English soil took place, and the old ruins of Farleigh Hungerford, which I never fail to visit, for in the chapel lies buried, under a striking monument, the body of Sir John Hungerford, the first Speaker of the House of Commons (*tem.* 1376). He is represented in a full-length figure, in armour, his legs crossed, and grasping a sword.

Bath Abbey also is a fine example of church architecture, and the vast number of memorial tablets on its walls provides a never-failing interest to the genealogist and the historical student. I never enter its walls without recalling the epigram:

> "This abbey shows in monument and bust
> How well Bath waters serve to lay the dust."

One of the institutions of Bath, now, alas! no longer there, was Mr. Frederick Harrison, a splendid example of

vigorous old age, mentally and physically, who lived to be nearly 100. My wife and I had the pleasure of his acquaintance, which in itself added to the amenities of our visits there, frequently repeated.

After our first visit and before the pressure of the war had placed an embargo on motoring and the consumption of petrol, we made a motor trip to Somerset and Devon, visiting Minehead, Exmoor, Lynton, Clovelly, Westward Ho, and many other beautiful spots in that beautiful district.

In the autumn we paid a short visit to Scotland to stay with Lord and Lady Stratheden, who on the 24th of August celebrated their golden wedding. Lord Stratheden (for many years well known in London society as Hally Campbell) was the younger son of Lord Campbell, the Chancellor, and author of that delightful book *The Lives of the Chancellors*. Lady Stratheden, or, to give her her full name, Lady Stratheden and Campbell, was my wife's sister. They lived at Hartrigge just outside Jedburgh. The war brought them great affliction, for their eldest son, Johnny Campbell, fell fighting on the Western front with the Brigade of Guards, which he had rejoined soon after the war began, and their grandson, Donald, Johnny Campbell's eldest son, also fell in the trenches six months later, while serving with the 3rd Coldstream Guards, his father's old regiment. I never knew the latter, but the former, my wife's nephew, was a dear friend, breezy, bright, companionable and impulsive, with a complexion like a baby. The golden wedding at Hartrigge brought together a family party, amongst whom I recall Lord and Lady Haversham, Lord Aldenham, Philip Beresford Hope (my brother-in-law) and Adrian Hope.

On the day following the celebration I was at Carlisle,

and with the Bishop of Carlisle and Canon Rawnsley drove out to Gretna and visited the site upon which was destined, in a few months' time, to grow up the vast concourse of buildings, factories and railway sidings, which constituted the Gretna Explosives Works, employing thousands of artificers, skilled and unskilled, during the period of the war. When my companions and I visited it on the 25th of August 1915, it was Arcady itself. The site had been selected, a few turfs had been turned and a load of timber deposited, but beyond that—nothing.

Reverting to my Parliamentary recollections during the year, I have only a few matters to record. The House was one day startled by the sudden appearance of a respectably dressed elderly gentleman who, having given the doorkeepers the slip, advanced rapidly up the floor of the House, seized the mace off the table and made as though he would have carried it off—a second Oliver Cromwell. It did not, however, take many seconds for the attendants to rescue the precious symbol from his profane hands and restore it to its place on the table. So rapidly was the scene played, that the proceedings were barely interrupted for a moment. On enquiry it appeared that the offender was a Temperance enthusiast whose mind had become temporarily unhinged, and after a caution privately given, he was politely escorted beyond the precincts.

On the same day that this occurred (the 18th of May) there died my old friend Sir Chandos Leigh, at the age of eighty-two. I have referred to him in an earlier part of this book, and will now only add that when he was incapacitated from taking active exercise he was largely instrumental in originating and maintaining the Society for the Provision of Playing-Fields in the London Suburbs, and did much in that direction to brighten the

lives and improve the physique of the young men and boys of London. When he retired in 1907 I appointed my old friend of undergraduate and of Northern Circuit days, Mr. Ernest Moon, to his place. Fully qualified by the experience of a big Parliamentary practice, a sound lawyer, and learned in the complexities of the mass of Standing Orders governing the private Bill procedure of the House, he has by general consent in every way justified the correctness of my choice.

When the war broke out, my secretary, Mr. E. Cadogan, left me to join his regiment, the Suffolk Yeomanry, and for a time his place was filled by Mr. Fox, who was one of the staff of the secretariat of the House; but he too, after a few weeks, joined the Brigade of Guards, and fell a victim to a German bullet early in the war. Then Mr. F. C. Bramwell, one of the more senior secretaries in the House of Commons, combined his work in the department with the work of my office, and rendered me invaluable help in my department until soon after the close of the war.

Another old official of the House left us in the summer. Sir David and Lady Horatia Erskine had celebrated their golden wedding in 1911. Lady Horatia had been in indifferent health, and Sir David, who had succeeded Mr. Gossett in 1885, had now reached the age of seventy-seven and felt like taking a rest. He had been appointed Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms in 1875, and had thus completed forty years' service. His resignation was received with general regret, for he had endeared himself to all the Members by his courteous and sympathetic manners, the charm of his kindly and somewhat shy demeanour and the readiness with which he met all demands so far as lay in his power. I was always on friendly, even intimate, relations—a somewhat

unusual phenomenon between next-door neighbours. He was a great stickler for all the forms and traditions, and did not readily fall in with proposed innovations. I remember having much difficulty in persuading him to allow the broad leather band on the floor, which marks the position of the bar of the House, to be advanced a few feet, so as to give more room to Members standing at the bar, and so as to mark the real position of the bar, which until that time it did not correctly notify. I am sure that no duty was more painful to him than that, which he was sometimes called upon to fulfil, of removing Members from the House, and he always carried it out with a pained and sorrowful expression. After his retirement he never could make up his mind to visit the House again. He died in 1921, at the age of eighty-three.

He was succeeded by Admiral Sir Colin Keppel, who, at first somewhat nervous in his new duties, soon took to the water like a sailor and gallantly plays his part.

The position of the Serjeant-at-Arms is somewhat anomalous, for he is in reality a servant of the Crown and is only lent by the Sovereign to the House. He is therefore appointed by the Sovereign and not by the House, though his salary is borne on the estimates voted by Parliament.

Before the war an officer in H.M. Forces could not remain on full pay and sit as a Member, but during the war an Act of Parliament was passed enabling Members who were serving in the Forces to retain their seats in the Commons, and this carried with it the corollary that officers and men serving in the Forces could stand for and be elected to Parliament without disqualification. Several officers took advantage of this, and amongst others my brother Cecil, who at the end of October was

returned unopposed for Westmorland, the seat for which my father had sat for some twenty-five years.

At the end of November I had the pleasure of making a presentation on behalf of Members of all parties in the House to Miss Asquith on the occasion of her marriage to Mr. Bonham Carter. The presentation gift took the form of a silver-gilt inkstand and of a diamond star, and was made in my library. The Prime Minister, Mr. Redmond and Mr. Chaplin made suitable little speeches, and Miss Asquith, who has since then developed an astonishing talent for public speaking, made a graceful reply. Mr. Chaplin was at the time the nominal leader of the Opposition, being the senior Privy Councillor of all those not included in the Coalition Cabinet; but I suppose that nobody felt less like opposing H.M. Government, of which he was a warm supporter, and he limited his duties as leader of the Opposition to a periodical enquiry of the leader of the House as to the nature of the business proposed to be taken each week.

Another incident, which I can recall, was the discovery on the floor of the House of a set of false teeth, which belonged to a respected M.P., who had stowed them in his pocket and had in pulling out his pocket-handkerchief inadvertently dropped them. Mr. H. J. Tennant, observing the incident, secured them and placing them in a large envelope, returned them by a messenger to the toothless loser.

The last occurrence worthy of mention was this. One evening soon after the restrictions as to the serving and consumption of alcoholic liquors in clubs came into force, I was dining at the Beefsteak Club with His Excellency Count Benckendorff, the Russian Ambassador. Our modest repast had been somewhat prolonged and we still had some unfinished glasses of whisky-and-soda on the

table when the waiter announced to us the visit of a policeman, who had come to see if the new regulations were being complied with. He enquired our names and addresses, as presumably we were violating the law, but on receiving the information, he retired (I think it was about 9.35 p.m.) and we heard no more of the matter. Probably the ex-territorial privileges of the Ambassador procured us immunity from prosecution.

1916

The year began with the Session of the previous year still uncompleted. There had been considerable divergencies of opinion in the Cabinet as to the adoption of compulsory military service, but it was generally understood that the Cabinet had in the last days of the old year finally adopted it in a modified form. Sir John Simon, who was known to be an opponent, resigned on the 1st of January. On the 5th of January the Prime Minister introduced the Government Bill which, whilst omitting Ireland altogether and permitting conscientious objectors to escape, applied compulsory military service to all single men, who had up to that date remained unattested. There was a good two days' debate on the introduction of the Bill, two days were also occupied on the second reading, which passed by 431 to 39; on the 24th of January the Bill passed its third reading in the Commons and three days later it received the Royal assent and Parliament was prorogued. The Act when it came to be applied did not provoke all the difficulties which had been predicted and the principle was generally accepted. There can be little doubt now, I conceive, that if in the first few days of the war in August 1914 the Government had taken powers to compel universal military service, if necessary, the principle would have

then been adopted, a vast amount of time would have been saved, and it would have been brought home to the nation as a whole that a very much larger effort was necessary than the nation at that time realized. There was, however, no statesman, with the exception perhaps of Lord Roberts, who had then realized the magnitude of the task before us, and until Lord Kitchener had referred to the three years' duration of the war, most men had expected it to be short, though costly in life and money.

At this time the Government had realized the necessity for strict economy in all branches of the public service, and had called upon the public museums to carry out this policy. At the British Museum there was amongst the trustees considerable reluctance to close either the Bloomsbury or the South Kensington departments. I supported the proposals for closing at Bloomsbury, but with little success, being left in a small minority. At the Natural History Museum, when the subject was discussed, the trustees were equally divided, Eventually a compromise was arrived at by which the reading-room at Bloomsbury and the more popular parts of the Natural History Museum in Cromwell Road were kept open to the public, and the rest closed. It may be well here to add, although I am somewhat anticipating the course of events, that a large quantity of the most valuable possessions of the Museums were packed up and stored in various safe and distant places, including the unused Post Office tube which runs, I believe, from St. Martin's to Paddington. As the tube is well below the surface of the street, and as constant watch was kept upon the cases, in which the inestimably valuable possessions of the Museum were packed, it would have been impossible to find a securer spot, and it is gratifying to know that

they were all eventually replaced without any loss or damage whatsoever.

One Sunday my wife and I went to morning service at the Temple Church, to hear the Dean of St. Paul's (whose soubriquet was the "gloomy dean") preach. The Master, or the Reader, or the Organist, or whoever is responsible for the choice of the hymn following the sermon, displayed an unexpected vein of humour by selecting for that occasion the hymn whose first line runs, "The gloom of night surrounds us all."

The new Session of Parliament began on the 15th of February, and the time up to Easter was mainly occupied by discussions on votes of credit, on economy, on the shortcomings of the Air Service, and of anti-aircraft defence, as well as on the many and onerous taxes of Mr. McKenna's Budget. The House was startled one day by the sudden crash on to the floor of a gentleman who jumped over the rail in front of the Ambassadors' gallery near the clock, and fell with a loud thud. It was lucky that nobody was standing there, and it was also lucky that the gentleman in question did not break a leg. Before he could be assisted out of the House he called out something which I gathered was a demand for helmets for soldiers, though it appeared to me that helmets for M.P.'s seemed to be a more relevant proposition. His name, I believe, was Mr. Turnbull.

About this time I had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of General Greene, ex-Governor of Havana, who had had an adventurous career in the American army. At the time of the Russo-Turkish War in 1878 he was attached to the Russian army, and when it halted just outside Constantinople at San Stephano. General Greene was the first to ride into the town, unaccompanied and unmolested. As I thought he might be interested to

meet somebody who was also present on that occasion, I invited to meet him Sir Colin Keppel, the Serjeant-at-Arms, who had been a midshipman on one of Her Majesty's men-of-war, anchored in the Bosphorus, and had watched the proceedings through a telescope. It was rather a remarkable *rencontre* after the lapse of thirty-eight years.

General Greene later on invited me to a luncheon party, where for the first time I met the American Ambassador, Mr. Page, as well as the Netherlands Minister, Jonkheer Van Swinderen, Governor Forbes and M. Nabokoff, the Russian Chargé d'Affaires.

One day, whilst passing the Royal Institution in Albemarle Street, I made so bold as to go in, and was warmly welcomed by that distinguished man of science, the late Professor Sir J. Dewar. He was engaged in blowing soap bubbles. It may seem, when stated thus baldly, to be a childish occupation, but these were gigantic soap bubbles of some 18 to 24 inches diameter, showing beautiful prismatic colours with dark caps at the top and bottom, and lasting many days, even weeks. His explanations, most lucidly given, convinced me at the time of their scientific value, but as I have completely forgotten them, I will not attempt an explanation.

In April a deputation of French Senators and Deputies visited London, and I was asked to receive them at the House of Commons. They came to my library and I made them a speech in French, in which I tried to explain to them the vast efforts we were making and the heavy responsibilities we were undertaking, their compatriots being at that time somewhat sceptical upon both points. The late Baron d'Estournelles de Constant, an old diplomat and formerly at the Court of St. James's, was one of the leaders of the deputation. He became quite

a leader in the Senate in subsequent years, though rather a faddist, and a warm supporter of the League of Nations.

I had arranged to pay a brief visit to Bath at Easter time, but my stay was interrupted on Easter Monday by a recall to London for a secret sitting of the House on Easter Tuesday. The manner in which this was carried out was as follows: At the end of questions the Prime Minister directed my attention to the fact that strangers were present. I thereupon, according to the Standing Orders, put the question that strangers be ordered to withdraw, and when this motion had been passed, all the galleries, including the Ladies' Gallery and the Reporters' Gallery, were cleared, as well as the passages leading to them and the Post Office in the Members' lobby. These arrangements had been made beforehand by me, in conjunction with the officials of the House, and were followed on the occasion of all subsequent secret sittings. The messengers of the House also took the precaution of looking under the seats of the galleries before they themselves withdrew. The Prime Minister then moved, and it was carried, that the remainder of the sitting should be a secret sitting. This was done in order to make any publication, except the official publication of the proceedings, a penal offence. There was a very full House. Members soon occupied the galleries, including the Reporters' Gallery and the Peers' Gallery, and presumably for the first time there was really sufficient seating for all the 600 odd Members of the House if all had been present. The Prime Minister spoke for two hours, and discussed the question of manning the army and a further extension to all married men of military age of compulsory military service. The debate proceeded all that evening, and was resumed on the following day

under similar conditions. This was just at the moment when the rebellion broke out in Dublin which led to much loss of life and the destruction of many fine buildings, the resignation of Mr. Birrell, the execution of a number of the rebels, and the controversies which followed thereupon. These events, exciting at the time, have all passed into history and do not demand any detailed treatment in these memoirs.

On the 4th of May I attended the memorial service at St. Margaret's, Westminster, for Lord St. Aldwyn and his son Lord Quenington. The latter had succumbed to wounds received in the field. He had sat in the House for a few years, where he was better known as Micky Hicks Beach, and had given great promise of becoming a serious and painstaking politician, though I doubt if he would ever have become as great a man as his father, for whom I had always felt a special regard and admiration. Sir Michael Hicks Beach was a House of Commons man of the first rank. To a handsome face, fine presence and resonant voice he added decision and authority. His long experience in politics from 1865 to 1906, and his administration of many offices during those years, gave him a position amongst his contemporaries second to none but Lord Salisbury or Mr. Balfour. Disdaining popular devices for seeking applause, his fearless rectitude and high character earned for him the confidence and respect of the nation.

Another death which occurred about this period was that of my chaplain, Archdeacon Wilberforce. He had been subject to severe bronchial attacks for some little time, and had at times been unable to perform his duties, but he stuck manfully to his post until a week or two before the end. He was seventy-five when he died, and had been Speaker's Chaplain for twenty-one years. He

was buried in the cloisters of the Abbey and I acted as one of the pall-bearers at his funeral.

During the month of May a deputation of members of the Russian Duma visited England, and amongst other places, the House of Commons and the Speaker's House. At a luncheon which was given to them in the "Harcourt" Room on the terrace, I proposed the health of "our Russian colleagues," and it was responded to by M. Protopopoff, who subsequently became one of the ill-fated Ministers of the Czar, a special object of hatred to the people of Petersburg, and one of the first victims of the Revolution.

Two stories which were going the rounds about this time have remained in my memory. The first related to a memorial service for Her Majesty Queen Victoria, which was held at Frogmore Chapel at which a little bird had appeared and flitted about the chapel during the service. At its conclusion Princess Christian said to Queen Alexandra: "I think that was dear Mamma's soul which visited us in the shape of that little bird." To which Queen Alexandra replied: "I don't think so. That nasty little bird made a mess on my hat and dear Mamma's soul would never have done that."

The second story was of the Prince of Wales, who, on meeting a highly-decorated Colonel, who had not, however, seen much active service, observed to him: "I see that you and I have been through the same campaigns, sir."

In the month of July we had a remarkable division in the House of Commons. The subject of the debate had been a Bill to provide against the necessity of freshly-appointed Ministers having to seek re-election in their constituencies. When the question of the second reading was put, a division was insisted upon and the tellers

reported: Ayes, 158; Noes, 0. I do not remember any similar incident having occurred previously, though in the Session of 1917 it occurred three times in one evening during the committee stage of the Air Force Bill, when Mr. Pemberton Billing insisted against the general sense of the House in taking divisions.

For the benefit of those unacquainted with our procedure, I should explain that the two tellers on either side are not counted in the numbers reported to the Chair.

The House rose on the 23rd of August, and during that month we had several visits from Zeppelins over Suffolk. My house was again shaken by bombs dropped in the neighbourhood, both at Felixstowe and at Kesgrave, but the latter all fell in a wood and little damage was done.

An amusing incident occurred to me one day as I was motoring in to Ipswich to attend a meeting of the County Council there. A tyre burst, and whilst my chauffeur was replacing it, I strolled across to the neighbouring common to watch an anti-aircraft battery at drill. My action became an object of suspicion to the officer in command, who sent a man to take the number of the car. He then communicated with the police and asked them to discover who was the owner of the suspicious car He never asked me my name or business, and I went on my way unsuspectingly. It was not until later that the police informed me of the officer's suspicions as to my being a German spy, or of his anxiety, when the secret of my identity was revealed to him, that I should not be informed of them.

Before the end of the Session the House had lost one of its prominent and most forceful Members. Sir Arthur Markham never spoke without having something important and striking to say. He was not, perhaps, always wise in the selection of the causes which he under-

took to advocate, but his personality and obvious sincerity and directness never failed to impress the House. At the end of July he informed me privately that he was in possession of some information of an important character and affecting the reputation of one or more distinguished officials at the War Office, and that he required my advice and assistance in determining whether and in what manner he should make the matter public. I placed my services at his disposal, but owing to various circumstances, our interview was more than once postponed, and before it could take place death had removed him from our midst. I believe that the subject matter of our interview would have related to what was subsequently known as the Mrs. Cornwallis West affair. A strange story is told in connection with Sir A. Markham's sudden death. He was the tenant of Newstead Abbey, the former home of Lord Byron, and popularly reputed to be a haunted house. During his absence from home Lady Markham had ordered a certain piece of water in the grounds, known as the Angel's Pond, to be drained off and cleaned out. The old retainers about the place were in despair, as there seemed to be a superstition that evil would befall if the Angel's Pond were ever interfered with, and that the owner or occupier would die. However that may be, the pond was cleared out, and within a month both Major Webb, the owner, and Sir A. Markham were no more.

Before Parliament reassembled in the autumn, the Prime Minister asked me to preside over a Conference to be composed of Peers and Members of the House of Commons, representing the several political parties in proportion to their strength in the House, the object of the Conference being to endeavour to arrive at an agreement upon many issues connected with electoral reform,

such as one man one vote, women's suffrage, redistribution, and so forth. It was with some hesitation that I accepted the task. Feeling upon these topics had run very high before the war, the members of the Conference were not to be officially appointed by the several parties, and there seemed to be no security that even if we could agree, Parliament would ratify our decisions. On the other hand, however, the war was acting as a strong cementing force, a Coalition Government was in power, and the time was perhaps opportune for an agreement if such a thing were possible. I felt very strongly that to renew these party and domestic polemics at the end of the war would bring discredit upon Great Britain in the face of her Dominions and Colonies, at the very moment when the nation should be occupied in the consideration of large and novel problems of every kind arising out of the war and the peace which must eventually follow.

As time went on I became more and more impressed with the soundness of this view, and frequently pressed it upon my colleagues when there seemed to be any danger of a breakdown. A list of proposed members of the Conference was prepared by the Whips and submitted to me, and, whilst staying at Nuneham for some shooting in September, I invoked the assistance of my host, Mr. L. Harcourt, in making a selection designed to represent and balance as fairly as possible the several interests concerned. Two days after the beginning of the Autumn Session, we began work at the Local Government Board, and Mr. Walter Long, as President of that Department, made the opening speech and wished us luck. We sat two mornings a week all through October, November and December, and soon got into the intricacies of registration. I endeavoured to push off the burning question

of women's suffrage as long as I could, and succeeded, for I felt that if we could agree upon other matters, such as the owners' vote, the extension of the suffrage, redistribution of seats, and so forth, there might be a greater disposition to come to some satisfactory solution of the women's question. It turned out that this was a correct diagnosis of the position, although we took a long time to complete our labours. At one moment they were seriously imperilled by the resignation from our body of three of its prominent members, Lord Salisbury, Sir Frederick Banbury and Mr. J. Craig; and at about the same moment we also lost the services of Sir R. Finlay, who was appointed Lord Chancellor in Mr. Lloyd George's new Coalition Ministry. The vacancies caused by the departure of Lord Salisbury, Sir F. Banbury and Mr. J. Craig were filled up by the accession to our numbers of Mr. C. Stuart Wortley, Mr. Touche and Mr. Archdale.

It was never made quite clear to me why Lord Salisbury, Sir F. Banbury and Mr. Craig left us, but I supposed they found that their views were not in harmony with those of the rest of their Unionist colleagues and that they were gradually being pressed to accept propositions going further than they could willingly adopt. However, with their departure a more conciliatory disposition manifested itself, and in the new year good progress was made.

The autumn Session meant hard work for me. The sittings of the Conference occupied two mornings a week, and also involved long and anxious discussions with our very capable and hard-working secretary, Mr. Jerred, of the Local Government Board, and a preparation of the work to be brought before the Conference; and of course there was the daily work in the House itself. The

Session was occupied with discussions on a Vote of Credit, a Registration of Names Bill, a Pension Bill, and other minor matters; and a good deal of time was devoted to a consideration of the national position in the matter of food supply and the evidently growing scarcity of that commodity. The appointment of a Food Controller was promised, and in that connection I was approached by the Prime Minister and offered the position. Although I took a day or two to consider his invitation, I never felt that I possessed the necessary qualifications for the post. I had had little or no acquaintance with the administration of a big department, nor any business experience sufficient for dealing with large contracts, neither had I the initiative necessary for the successful fulfilment of such a duty. My heart was by this time set upon carrying the Electoral Reform Conference through to a satisfactory termination, and I had also the wish to remain Speaker until the end of the war, and, like Mr. Britling, "see it through." I accordingly declined the offer and continued my more congenial and, as I believed, more useful tasks. In parenthesis I may add here that Lord Devonport was eventually appointed to the post.

The Session passed without any particular incidents, except that one evening a woman in the gallery showered leaflets into the House and began making a speech demanding, so far as I could gather, the deposition of the King; and on another day we had 216 questions on the Order Paper, at that time a record.

In London and the country the Zeppelins and the "Taubes", as the German aeroplanes were at first called, were busy. One of the former, the L.33, commanded by one Brocker, was brought down at Little Wigborough near Colchester, and the crew captured. My wife and

daughter and I motored over from Campsea Ashe and inspected the wreck of this huge monster, which narrowly escaped falling on a cottage. I was amused at conversation which I overheard about it. A man was saying of some of his friends: "Seeing the Zepp falling in flames, they passed the remark that it reminded them of the Day of Judgment."—"Reminded" is distinctly good!

As I was walking along Piccadilly one morning this autumn, I heard two or three bombs explode in the direction of Buckingham Palace and Belgrave Square, but as no Zepp or aeroplane was visible, I thought that I must have been mistaken. An hour or two later, however, my hearing was confirmed by the announcement that a "Taube" had been over London and dropped some three or four small bombs which had fallen in the Belgrave Square district. This was the first aeroplane to visit London, and it must have come at such a height as to have been invisible—at all events nobody saw it.

My brother Cecil was at this time serving at the Horse Guards as Chief of the Staff to Lord French, and living in rooms in Savile Row with a colleague, Mr. Maitland Kersey. I was invited to dine with them there, and found a distinguished military party, consisting of the Duke of Connaught, Lord French, Sir William Robertson, Sir Neville Macready and General Henderson. Lord Shaughnessy and I were the only civilians of the party.

The first week of December saw a Cabinet crisis and reconstruction in progress, but the House of Commons had little or nothing to do with the matter and was never fully informed either of the cause or of the course of the crisis. The Cabinet collapsed from internal strains and not from outside pressure. As far as I remember, no

public or official announcement was ever made, either at the time or subsequently, of the circumstances which brought about the end of Mr. Asquith's long administration, and the termination of his official connection with the government of the country. I had been a Member before Mr. Asquith entered the House, and I had heard his maiden speech. I recollect that it was followed by a speech from Sir Henry James, in which he laid a trap for an unsuspecting House and fairly caught it, for he said that Mr. Asquith's maiden speech (which had in fact been a brilliant one) gave no promise of any future performance or distinction. At this pronouncement there were loud protests of "Oh! Oh's!" and "No! No's!" Then Sir Henry James went on calmly to complete his sentence by saying—"because the promise has already been fulfilled," and so on. I remember Mr. Asquith's firm administration of the Home Office, and particularly a passage of arms which I had with him over the appointment of a mining inspector in Cumberland, in which I must confess to his having bested me. I recall his elucidation of Budgets and his conduct of finance Bills through the House. I always admired the manner in which he steered the Parliament Bill through the perilous depths and shoals in its course (whatever may have been my personal view of its policy), and when the war came, nothing could have been more dignified or convincing than the statesmanlike and patriotic speeches which he then delivered, culminating in the oft-quoted declaration of the 23rd of February 1916, which began: "We shall never sheathe the sword until," etc. As the year went on, however, it seemed as if he were losing his grasp of the helm; the policy of "Wait and see" took too prominent a place, and, if common rumour was to be credited, the discussions in the Cabinet were too

frequently adjourned without any decision being formulated or adopted. All this, however, was conjecture, and I had no means of knowing what element of truth it contained. I know that when Mr. Asquith resigned and was succeeded by Mr. Lloyd George, I had grave misgivings as to the future, for up to that time the new Prime Minister had not been a lucky politician. The valuation clauses of his "People's Budget" had proved unworkable, his National Insurance scheme had met with endless difficulties, and although brilliant as a debater, he had not wholly convinced the people of his administrative capacity. The next two years, however, were to show that I was wrong and that my doubts were without solid foundation.

Before Parliament was prorogued on the 22nd of December I attended in the House of Lords for the Royal assent to a number of Bills, when Sir Robert Finlay, who had not yet been created a peer, presided on the Woolsack. It was not altogether an unprecedented event, though it was the first time that I had witnessed the incident of the Keeper of the Great Seal presiding over the Assembly of which he had not yet become a Member.

CHAPTER XXVI

1917

Electoral Reform Conference Report—Representation of the People Bill—Visit to the Front—Zeppelins brought down in East Anglia—The Irish Convention—Redistribution in Ireland—More Air Raids.

As the Government were anxious to include in their programme for the year a measure dealing with the franchise and its satellite subjects, it became necessary for my Electoral Reform Conference to push on with its work. This was so satisfactorily accomplished that by the 10th of January we had come to a complete agreement on all the main resolutions. There remained, however, the very ticklish and difficult question of the extension of the new franchises to the women. We sat daily for the next few days, and on some occasions all day, and finally, on the 26th of January, we completed our task and the draft report of our work was agreed to. The members of the Conference took me completely by surprise at the conclusion of our labours by presenting me with a handsome silver dish, on which their autograph signatures had been engraved. Mr. T. P. O'Connor, the senior of them, made a little speech, and I returned thanks, in very inadequate terms, I fear, for I had not anticipated this friendly gift and was quite unprepared.

The report of the Conference took the form of a letter from myself to the Prime Minister, and was dated the 30th of January. In it I referred to the origin of the Conference and the method in which the selection of its

members was made. Then I proceeded to set out the series of resolutions, which had been unanimously agreed to, dealing with the method of registration, the extension of the franchise, the principles governing the redistribution of seats, University representation, the method and costs of elections, the Local Government register and provisions for the votes of soldiers and sailors. All these resolutions had been unanimously agreed. At the end of the letter I added the resolutions which had only been agreed to by a majority, viz. that for the extension of the vote to women on the Local Government register and to the wives of men on that register, provided they had reached the age of thirty or thirty-five, leaving to Parliament the decision as to which figure to adopt; and the resolutions in favour of the alternative vote where there were more than two candidates for a single seat, and in favour of arrangements being made to enable absent voters to record their votes.

My report to the Prime Minister was at once published and met with a very favourable reception from the Press and from all parties. Mr. Walter Long, who had been President of the Local Government Board at the commencement of our work, wrote to me:

DEAR MR. SPEAKER,

Thank you for your letter and copy of the Resolutions arrived at by the Conference. I need not say how pleased I am; the results seem to be really splendid. I know how much we owe to you; it is entirely thanks to you that the Conference has come through so triumphantly.

Sincerely yours,

WALTER H. LONG.

The Prime Minister referred to it in a speech in the Commons as "almost a miracle." The public were surprised, but pleased at the termination of incessant wranglings over questions of secondary importance in comparison with the big issues which were before them or looming ahead.

I cannot help placing on record my obligation, for the services they rendered, to Lord Burnham, Sir Ryland Adkins, Sir William Bull, Mr. W. H. Dickinson, Mr. Maurice Healy, Sir Harry Samuel, Sir John Simon, and Mr. Aneurin Williams. Above all, I cannot sufficiently acknowledge my indebtedness to our secretary, Mr. W. T. Jerred, of the Local Government Board, for his great knowledge, industry and readiness of resource. I was in constant, almost daily, touch with Mr. Jerred, and we worked in perfect harmony. There was only one subject on which we differed, destined to bring not peace but a sword into political parties and sections, viz. proportional representation, or, as it is more familiarly called, P.R. I had become at that time a convert to this nostrum, at all events to the extent that I thought it should be tried, and in my original plan for redistribution submitted to the Conference, it occupied a prominent place. Mr. Jerred was, although in many respects an advanced reformer, a disbeliever in P.R., and many an hour did we spend in discussing it. As it emerged from the Conference, P.R. was only to be made applicable to the cases of boroughs which returned from three to five Members. Its further history will be told later.

It is unnecessary and would be tedious to enter into any further analysis of the contents of my letter to the Prime Minister. There was some difficulty in deciding how best to bring it before the House in such a way as to avoid making the Bill, to be founded upon it, a Govern-

ment measure (which might provoke opposition) and yet procure the general assent of the House to its contents. The method eventually adopted was that Mr. Asquith, the leader of the Opposition, moved a resolution combining a vote of thanks to me for my services on the Conference, with an acceptance of the results. This did not pass without considerable discussion, the Opposition being led by Mr. Clavell Salter (now Mr. Justice Clavell Salter), but it was eventually adopted by 341 to 62. The Government then adopted the proposals, embodied them in the Representation of the People Bill, which was placed under the charge of Sir George Cave, and, with a few slight modifications, carried them all into law in 1918. This work took up a great part of the time of the Session, for, although there was no factious or obstructive Opposition, many of the proposals were novel and the machinery for bringing them into operation required to be carefully thought out. My part in the achievement of the success of the Act was by no means at an end with the vote of thanks for my services—in fact, the longest though not the most difficult portion of my labours only began in May. I was appointed Chairman of the Boundary Commission for England, with the duty of carrying out the instructions of the House, which had been carefully debated and decided, and rearranging the boundaries of all the English constituencies in such a way as to produce as far as possible single Member constituencies of about 70,000 population each, without altering the boundaries of administrative areas if it could be avoided, combining adjacent boroughs, but retaining any counties or boroughs as separate units if they had a population of 50,000. It was a sort of jigsaw puzzle, though rather more interesting. I had the assistance as colleagues of

Colonel Close, R.E. (the head of the Ordnance Department at Southampton), Sir Samuel Provis (a former Permanent Secretary of the Local Government Board), Sir T. Elliot (of the Board of Agriculture), and the invaluable Mr. Jerred as our secretary. The method of our procedure was as follows:—We began by making a scheme for each county and publishing it in the county affected. Commissioners visited the localities, wherever there was notice of any objection, and reported to us the results of their enquiry. Thereupon we reconsidered the schemes and made such alterations as seemed to us desirable. Finally an exact description of each constituency was drawn up and a map of it prepared under Colonel Close's supervision in his department. When it is remembered that at this time the Ordnance Map Department was very heavily engaged making and shipping out daily vast quantities of maps of all scales to the various fronts on which our forces were fighting, it was a remarkable feat for the Department to have been able to cope with the work which we imposed upon them.

Work similar to that which was done for the English constituencies had also to be got through in the case of the Scottish constituencies, but with a Boundary Commission differently composed, still assisted, however, by the indispensable Mr. Jerred.

It took thirty-three sittings, the last of which was held on the 15th of September, to complete the work in time to prepare the all-important Schedule containing the details of the proposed changes in the constituencies and to have it ready for the autumn Session. This occupation, in addition to the usual sittings of the House, absorbed a great deal of my time and attention during 1917, but I was much interested in it and the work was quite congenial.

To revert to the work of the Session, Parliament met on the 7th of February, the Address was voted after two days' debate, and the House was soon engaged in considering the all-important problems forced upon it by the critical position of the war. The necessity of improving the food supply, of defeating the submarine menace (which had developed into more than a menace), of strengthening the air defences of London and the country generally, of meeting the insidious campaign of the pacifists and the weak-kneed, the administration of Ireland and the immediate grant of Home Rule, the necessity of prolonging the life of Parliament for a further period, of counteracting the high prices of almost every article of necessity, of repeated votes of credit for the defence of the nation, and of schemes for national service, occasioned debates in the House and are subjects for the historian, but need no comment here. It only remains for me to record a few of the minor incidents of this part of the Session, and of matters in which I was personally engaged.

Towards the end of January I was summoned to attend a meeting of the War Cabinet at Downing Street upon the subject of a Bill to deprive enemy peers and princes of their titles. It seemed to be a curious subject to occupy the attention of a small body of men, constituted especially for the daily supervision and control of the operations of war, but the matter required immediate attention and called for a decision of the Cabinet. In the midst of our discussion of this topic, Sir Neville Macready, the Adjutant-General, appeared and asked for a decision upon a pressing matter which had just taken place in the fighting line. This was given and our discussion was resumed and concluded. The impression which I formed was that the daily sittings of this small

War Cabinet of four, viz. the Prime Minister, Mr. Bonar Law, Lord Curzon and Mr. Henderson, with the presence as required of the experts called in, was an admirable instrument for the purposes for which it was designed. At all events, when I was a witness there, they did their business rapidly and effectively.

The War Office had secured the Château de Tramecourt, near the site of the battlefield of Agincourt, and at no great distance from the front, as a place to which military attachés of neutral Powers, war correspondents, distinguished Colonial visitors and others could be entertained for a few days and given an opportunity of witnessing something of the military operations and preparations at the front. I was requested to make a selection of Members of Parliament to whom invitations could be sent, and I accordingly prepared a short list representing all sections in the House. Several availed themselves of the opportunity offered, and on the 8th of March I also went over for a long week-end. I found amongst the guests assembled, Sir Herbert Samuel, Mr. Gulland and Mr. Terrell, all three M.P.'s, Mr. Riversdale Walrond, M. Kato Yokoi, a Japanese statesman, and the novelist and poet, Mr. E. W. Hornung (the author of *Raffles*). With the latter I visited the Somme battlefield, where a general German retreat to the Hindenburg line was then in progress; the town of Ypres, still besieged and being daily battered into ruins; the Trench Mortar School at S. Pol, and the Convalescent Hospital at Boulogne. We saw batteries in action on the Somme, dug-outs and trenches near Martinpuich, many damaged and derelict tanks, the big mine crater at La Boiselle, an aeroplane engagement over Ypres, the German front line of trenches at Wytschaete from the top of Mount Kemmel, and many German prisoners being marched

to the rear. One day we had luncheon with General Allenby and his staff at his Headquarters, and another day with General Plumer and his staff at Cassell, from whose Headquarters a splendid panorama of the country was visible. This visit to the front enabled me to obtain some idea of the terrible devastation and ruin caused to the countryside by the war, devastation and ruin which were both subsequently intensified by the German advance in the following year. Mr. Hornung, although not very active and somewhat hampered by the weight of the helmet which he wore, was a very pleasant companion, full of old Eton reminiscences and cricketing recollections. He subsequently published some lines of description of our experiences, from which I quote the following:

The sights came fast and thick,
A party of pampered prisoners, toying with shovel and pick;
A town where some of the houses are so many heaps of stone,
And some of them steel anatomies picked clean to the buckled bone.
A road like a pier in a hurricane of mountainous seas of mud,
Where a few trees, whittled to walking-sticks, rose out of the frozen flood
Like the masts of the sunken villages that might have been down below,
Or blown off the festering face of an earth that God Himself wouldn't know;
And behind and beyond and about us were the long black dogs of war,
With pigmies pulling their tails for them, and making the monsters roar,
As they slithered back on their haunches, as they put out their flaming tongues
And spat a murderous message long leagues from their iron lungs.

Towards the end of March the revolution took place in Russia, and about ten days later the Government, somewhat prematurely in my judgment, prepared and carried a message of congratulation to the Duma upon

the (at the time) bloodless revolution which was thought to promise a more vigorous prosecution of the war. A somewhat curious circumstance happened in connection with this same resolution. It was the duty of the Clerk of the House to forward a copy of the resolution to the Foreign Office, with a request that it should be transmitted to the proper quarter in Russia. Sir Courtenay Ilbert, however, forgot all about it, and it was not until many weeks later, when I happened to enquire whether we had ever received any reply, that I discovered the omission and then hastened to repair it.

The death of the Duchess of Connaught took place on the 14th of March, and my wife and I attended the funeral service at St. George's Chapel at Windsor. On this occasion we were given seats in the choir and had a good view of the sad ceremony, the most impressive moment of which was when the coffin was gradually lowered by unseen agency into the vault below the chapel. The House of Commons had passed a vote of condolence with the Duke and the Royal Family, and my brother Cecil, who had been Military Secretary to the Duke in Canada, made his first official appearance in the House as the bearer of a message of thanks to the House for their sympathy. To the motion for an address of condolence to the King and the Duke of Connaught Mr. Ginnell had sent me privately an amendment which he desired to move, the effect of which was that we should also express our condolences "to His Majesty's Imperial cousin the German Kaiser"; but I was fortunately able to dissuade him from committing so gross a breach of decorum.

À propos of the funeral at Windsor, Lord Mersey told me that as he was on his way to Paddington, and being unable to find a taxi to take him, he happened

to see M. Cambon's car at the door of the French Embassy, and guessing its destination, he stopped the French Ambassador as he was stepping into his car and, in his best French, begged for a lift. M. Cambon however, not recognizing his interlocutor and mistaking him for a beggar, waved him aside and said: "Go away. No. No. I give you nozzing."

Air raids were very frequent this year, both in London and in the country. One bomb fell in the river just between the Speaker's House and Westminster Bridge. I missed the great air raid by twenty Gothas over London on the 7th of July, when some damage was done, 40 persons were killed and about 140 injured. I happened to be on a visit that Saturday morning to my sister-in-law Lady Lowther at Nashdom near Taplow, and was sitting out in the garden with the Italian Ambassador, Marchese Imperiali. It was a very hot day. We heard a good deal of noise and thought it was caused by distant thunder, but at luncheon time the Ambassador was rung up on the telephone and informed of what had happened.

On the Monday following, the adjournment of the House was moved by the Prime Minister, and in a secret sitting that evening the matter was discussed.

I had also missed the great explosion at Silvertown on the 19th of January. I happened to be at home in Suffolk on that day, and heard what seemed to be an unusually violent explosion at a great distance. I noted the time and on the following day read the account of what had occurred. As the crow flies, my house must be between 80 and 85 miles from the scene of the explosion, which a few days later I visited. We were accustomed at Campsea Ashe to hear many explosions and much firing of heavy guns. When the wind was

in the right quarter we could hear the firing in Flanders distinctly, and some of my neighbours declared that they had heard the Battle of Jutland. In June a Zeppelin, the L.48, was brought down at Theberton, by Captain Saundby and Lieutenant Watkins, a few miles from my house, and some of the crew were captured. A few days later my wife and I went over to see the wreck. I was told that within a very few minutes of the crash, although it occurred at about 4 a.m., a large crowd of motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians had gathered round the spot. The airship had been in difficulties for some time before, and its course had been plainly visible to the whole countryside. An old woman the next day picked up a fur glove some little distance from the wreck, and by a curious coincidence her husband picked up the pair to it about a mile off a week later.

As a result of the discussions on Ireland, the Prime Minister, after having suggested the immediate application of the Home Rule Act to Ireland with the exception of Ulster, and this proposal not being favourably received, proposed to summon a Convention in Dublin and leave to the Irish themselves the solution of their difficulties. In this connection it was proposed in some quarters that I should act as chairman, but I felt that such a duty would take me away, possibly for many months, from my work in the Chair and from my labours in connection with redistribution, and that it was undesirable that an Englishman should preside over a meeting of Irishmen discussing Irish affairs. I accordingly wrote to the Prime Minister propounding my views on the matter, and he accepted them as sound. As is well known, Sir Horace Plunkett was eventually unanimously chosen by the Convention as

its chairman, and I do not flatter myself with thinking that if I had occupied his place the result in the end would have been any more successful than it turned out.

During the summer, whilst arrangements were being made for calling up individuals who had enrolled for National Service, I was surprised and amused to receive a formal notice instructing me to present myself at the works of A. Hickman, Ltd., at Wolverhampton, where I should receive 4*s.* 10*d.* a day and 5*s.* a week war bonus. I acknowledged the letter, but pointed out that I was already employed by the State in another and more lucrative capacity, and also regretted that I was over the prescribed age. The story got about and a question was asked in the House upon it, when it appeared that the notice was intended for one of my employées, and that having given my name as his employer, a clerical error had occurred in filling up and addressing the notice.

One other matter, which had often been the subject of debate and controversy, was settled by the House before it rose for the summer recess on the 21st of August. The grille in front of the Ladies' Gallery was ordered to be removed, 120 voting for its removal and only 18 against.

During August and September I was kept busy with the concluding stages of the Electoral Boundaries Commissions' meetings, but I found time for two shooting visits, to Lord Harcourt at Nuneham and to Lord Portsmouth at Hurstbourne.

When the House reassembled on the 16th of October, a difficulty arose with regard to the application of the Representation of the People Bill to Ireland. The Electoral Reform Conference had proceeded on the

assumption that although an extension of the suffrage and cognate matters were applicable to Ireland, there was no necessity to consider the question of redistribution in that country, as it was provided for in the Home Rule Act. As, however, the Act had not come into force yet, and there seemed only a remote prospect of it becoming the law of the land before the Representation of the People Bill was through, it became necessary to take some action. Sir John Lonsdale proposed that the Bill should not apply to Ireland at all. This, however, was unacceptable, and the matter of redistribution was referred to an Irish Boundary Commission over which I presided. We got through our work expeditiously and without much difficulty, so far as local susceptibilities were concerned, but in the House of Commons, when it was proposed to insert the completed scheme into the Bill, the Irish Party raised a strong opposition, chiefly on the ground that such a step would have a bad effect on the prospects of the Irish Convention then sitting, and a good deal of the usual violent and extravagant language was pumped out. But on the following day an agreement was arrived at by which the whole question of Irish Redistribution was withdrawn from the Representation of the People Bill and referred to a small committee of Nationalists and Ulstermen, with myself as chairman, and with an understanding that whatever proposals we adopted should be embodied in a Bill, which was to be treated as uncontroversial. The last difficulty in the way having been removed, the Representation of the People Bill passed its third reading on the 7th of December. The opposition of the House towards P.R. had gradually stiffened, until it had been practically eliminated from the Bill. On the "alternative vote"

the House had been undecided and had wavered, but had eventually rejected it. The disqualification of conscientious objectors had given rise to many debates, but was eventually settled in the method proposed by Sir George Cave. In all other respects the Bill was substantially that recommended by the Speaker's Conference, as it came to be called. Mr. Healy had thrown out the suggestion that the Act should be called "The Lowther Act," but this proposal never caught on, and its formal official description still remains rather a mouthful.

During the autumn Session air raids over London had become tolerably (I ought perhaps to say intolerably) frequent, and I was consulted by Mr. Bonar Law, as the leader of the House, upon the steps, if any, to be taken, should an air raid take place during a sitting. Although the chances of a bomb being dropped into the House itself were very remote, what I feared was that an explosion in the immediate vicinity would shatter the glass ceiling over our heads, and that a shower of broken glass on bare heads might prove very disastrous. It was accordingly arranged that, in the event of an announcement of an air raid, the sitting should be suspended until the "All Clear" was sounded. This only happened once, on the 18th of December, when the sitting was suspended from 7 to 9. It was a bad raid and accounted for 10 killed and 75 injured. The house of a friend of mine in Eaton Square was pierced from top to bottom by a bomb, which set fire to one room only. He and his family were away at the time and had a lucky escape.

Towards the end of October a number of Senators and Congressmen from the Western States of U.S.A. passed through London on their way to visit the French

front. The Lord Chancellor (Lord Finlay) gave them a dinner at the Athenæum, and amongst other guests invited to meet them, were the Prime Minister, Mr. Balfour, Lord Curzon, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord French, Lord Robert Cecil and myself. These American gentlemen seemed very innocent of everything relating to the war, knew little or nothing of submarines, were sceptical about air raids, and would not believe that we had more than 100,000 men in the field. Of the air raids, however, they received that night some practical experience, for dinner was hardly over when Lord French was summoned to the Horse Guards, and shortly the "Take Cover" was sounded and the explosions and firing began.

Shortly after this dinner-party I was expressing to a member of the American Embassy my astonishment at the ingenuousness of these visitors from the States. His reply to me was that they were "specially selected boobs," whose duty it would be to go back to the far West and tell their friends that there really was a war going on in Europe.

On this occasion I heard an amusing story of a boy being invited to translate "J'y suis, j'y reste." His rendering was, "I am a Swiss, so I do no work."

At the end of the year I went to Cumberland and spent some time in my constituency. The year had been a busy one for me and my family. My wife was working almost daily at a workshop for the manufacture of special boots and shoes for the use of the wounded and maimed, and my daughter had joined a branch of the Army Pay Office domiciled in Regent Street, and was kept very hard at work there throughout the year. My work in connection with Electoral Reform and Redistribution had added very considerably to the length of

my usual day's work, and the daily sittings of the House had begun to resume their normal length and number. I had been able to keep away attacks of my old enemy the gout by a timely visit to Bath at Easter, and had there combined pleasure with business, for my wife and I had visited Lord Lansdowne at Bowood and enjoyed a sight of his magnificent collection of pictures. We had gone to see Thornbury Castle, the home of Mr. Algar Howard, and by the kind permission of Lord Berkeley, had visited his magnificently situated and historically interesting seat of Berkeley Castle, in which the room is still shown where Edward II was murdered. Princess Henry of Battenberg invited me one day to accompany her to Bradford-on-Avon, to call on Mr. and Mrs. Spencer Moulton, who lived at Kingston House, the former residence of the notorious Duchess of Kingston. In that beautifully situated little town of Bradford we were also shown a remarkable Saxon church and a very handsome old tithe-barn with a most elaborate but perfect roof.

During our visit to Bath I saw a good deal of Lord Atkinson, who had been an Irish Law Officer and was now a Lord of Appeal. He, as usual, was full of good stories, one of which I can recall. The late Lady Dunedin, travelling in an omnibus, was annoyed by the sniffing and snuffling of a fellow-passenger, and turning to her, said: "Madam, have you a handkerchief?" "Yes," replied the woman, "I have, but I only lend it to my particular friends."

Another story: A doctor after having enjoined on his patient's wife to be careful to take her husband's temperature, enquired of her on the following day what report she had to make. "Well," replied the woman, "I had no thermometer, so I used a barometer, and

as it pointed to 'Very dry,' I gave him a glass of beer, and he has gone to work."

During this year I had lost by death several friends and relatives. Mr. Arthur James, who died at Coton from pneumonia, after a brief illness, had married my second cousin Venetia Cavendish Bentinck. He had had a successful career on the turf and took a great interest in the breeding of racehorses, many of which he kept at Coton, but he was also fond of hunting, shooting and travelling. He never allowed sport to interfere with his duties as a country squire. He was greatly interested in political organization, was a generous contributor to the cause of charity, and was respected and beloved not only by his county neighbours but by a large circle of friends in the fashionable and racing worlds.

My sister-in-law, Miss Agnes Beresford Hope, once the gayest of the gay and the cheeriest of the cheery, succumbed to a long illness and died at the Lynch House near Dunstable.

Another victim was my wife's nephew, Mr. Harold Beresford Hope, a young man of great promise and of not inconsiderable performance. He had started on a promising career in the Diplomatic Service, had served for some time at Petersburg and was a good Russian scholar. After only a few days' illness, he died of meningitis on his arrival at Athens, to which post he had just been promoted from Rio. He was the last male of the Beresford Hope family, his father and uncle having predeceased him and left no other heirs. Whilst he was stationed at Petersburg he had conceived a great admiration for the Polish nation and had always believed that the old Kingdom of Poland would be resuscitated. In his will he left a magnificent service

of gold plate, which had come down to him from his great-grandfather, Marshal Lord Beresford, to the British Legation at Warsaw; and, after the war, this service of plate, of which I had had the use and enjoyment at the Speaker's House for my official dinners, was duly transferred to its destination. On the night after its arrival at its new home it narrowly escaped being carried off by burglars. It is to be hoped that it is now as safe as anything in Poland can be.

Professor T. McK. Hughes of Cambridge, whose death also occurred this year, was an old friend of Cambridge days. He always took a great interest in the A.D.C. during the days of my presidency of that club, and was extremely friendly towards undergraduates, in my days rather an unusual feature in the relations of Dons to those in "statu pupillari." He was then Professor of Geology, and I remember on one occasion an undergraduate who had dined not wisely but too well, enquiring of him whether he did not find the strata of the room somewhat oblique. I was not that undergraduate.



Drawing by Mr G. L. Stampa on the back of a menu card at a Savage Club Dinner

CHAPTER XXVII

1918

Irish Redistribution Conference—The End of P.R.—Death of John Redmond—Luncheon at Buckingham Palace—Frederick Harrison—Raemaekers' Cartoons.

This was the most crowded, agitated and exciting year that I can recall. It witnessed the final stages of the passing of the People's Representation Bill, the heaviest and most destructive air raids over London, the apparently irresistible advance of the whole German army on the Western front, the great reduction by submarines of food-bringing ships, the drastic curtailment of the consumption of the necessaries of life, widespread strikes in important industries and services, the sudden change in the military situation and the great advance of the Allies, the German defeat and signature of the Armistice, great legislative and Parliamentary activity, the dissolution of the long Parliament and a General Election. An *annus mirabilis*. It was a year of violent contrasts: deepest depression in March and exaggerated exultation in November. Although I was not unmoved by the events passing around me, I did not share in the emotions of the extremists, but endeavoured to pursue the even tenour of my way without the exhibition or expression of either despondency or elation.

At the beginning of January the House of Commons was not in session, but the House of Lords was considering the details of the Representation of the People

Bill. As I happened to be in town, I dropped in occasionally to see how matters were proceeding, and I am afraid that, owing to my ignorance of the etiquette of Their Lordships' House, I violated their rules by standing behind the Woolsack in front of the railing instead of placing myself behind it and immediately in front of the throne. My only excuse for this lapse from propriety was that, except for my occasional appearance at the bar to hear the King open Parliament or the Royal assent given, owing to the usual simultaneity of the sittings of the Lords and of the Commons, I was never an auditor of the Lords' debates. I had been brought to town by the sittings of the Irish Conference, constituted of Mr. McVeagh and Mr. Clancy for the Nationalists, of Mr. Coote (recently deceased) and Mr. Henry for the Ulstermen, and of myself as chairman. These gentlemen proved persistent and obstinate in their advocacy, and after five sittings I found myself compelled to give a casting vote. The details of the controversy were concerned with the redistribution and number of seats to be allotted to Tyrone, Fermanagh, Down, and to the Universities; but the whole scheme of the original Irish Redistribution Commission was technically in the melting-pot, although only a comparatively small part of it was the subject of contention. The inevitable P.R. question also arose again, but I decided that in the event of no agreement on this point resulting, I would not impose P.R. on Ireland by my casting vote. No agreement was arrived at and no P.R. was imposed. I reported in a letter to the Prime Minister, which was published as a Parliamentary Paper, the results of our deliberations and the conclusion to which I had come as to the alterations desirable in the divisions of County

Down. It had been arranged before our Conference met that its decisions would be accepted by both parties, and embodied in a non-contentious Bill. This duly happened and the Bill passed its third reading on the 30th of January.

Before the Session of 1917–18 came to an end the People's Representation Bill had returned from the Lords with several amendments, and a game of battledore and shuttlecock between the two Houses followed, the shuttlecocks being Proportional Representation and the Alternative Vote. The majorities in the Commons against the former increased, and finally, after many vicissitudes, the latter was rejected by one vote. A compromise, however, was arrived at on P.R., the effect of which was to impose upon me and a small commission the duty of selecting 100 seats to which P.R. could be made applicable, and, with the possibility that if our scheme were found suitable, it might pass into law when adopted by a resolution of both Houses.

The end of the Session came on the 6th of February, and the Representation of the People Act, with which I had been so closely associated from its initiation, received the Royal assent. The Act provided for the admission to the franchise of a greater number of new voters than any of its predecessors. The Reform Act of 1832, over which the struggles of parties nearly wrecked the British Constitution, added half a million voters to the register; Mr. Disraeli's Reform Act (nicknamed the Ten Minutes Act) added a million; Mr. Gladstone's Reform Act of 1884, after a violent agitation against the House of Lords in the constituencies, added four millions; and this Act, which passed with hardly a ruffle on the surface of the party waters, enfranchised eight millions. An old friend and former

M.P., Mr. Baumann, was almost alone in his denunciation of the measure and in his jeremiads as to the terrible and subversive character of its enactments; and it would have been more than human on my part if I had forborne in the following year (1919) from pointing out to him the results of the first General Election held under its provisions. However, without entering into any controversy on the political side of the question, it is perhaps permissible to take some credit for the fact that the General Election of 1918 is, so far as I know, the only one which never gave rise to a single election petition.

During this, the concluding part, of the Session of 1917, there were no Parliamentary incidents worth recalling except one, which occurred on the 17th of January, when a National Service Bill was under discussion. Mr. Hogge was addressing the House when his friend, Mr. Pringle, sprung a surprise on the House by espying strangers, and the galleries having been cleared, the remainder of the sitting was converted into a "secret sitting." We had now become so used to the necessary procedure (this being the seventh), that no difficulty arose in carrying it out. Mr. Balfour is credited with having said that the only use of secret sittings was to permit free criticism of our Allies in the war, which would otherwise be impossible.

During the short interval before the reassembling of Parliament on the 12th of February, I paid a visit to Chequers, and spent a most enjoyable afternoon with my old friends, Lord and Lady Lee of Fareham, who had made the munificent gift of the house and its treasures, with the surrounding estate, to the nation. Lord Lee had included the Speaker amongst the number of trustees to whom he had confided the management

of the trust for the benefit of future Prime Ministers, and it was my duty as well as a great pleasure to see the beautiful old house, the fine pictures, the artistic furniture, the interesting Cromwellian relics and the magnificent views which in combination make Chequers one of the most desirable as well as one of the most typical of the old country places in England.

The Speech from the Throne, as read by His Majesty, was very short and consisted of six paragraphs only. According to custom, in the interval between the opening by His Majesty and the assembling of the House of Commons, I was supplied by the Home Office with what purported to be an exact copy of the speech, and in due course I read the same to the House; but it appeared that my copy contained one more paragraph than His Majesty's original speech—a paragraph referring to a further session of the Imperial War Cabinet. I took an early opportunity of correcting the official record of our proceedings by eliminating the interloping paragraph, and I doubt if many, or any, Members discovered the discrepancy.

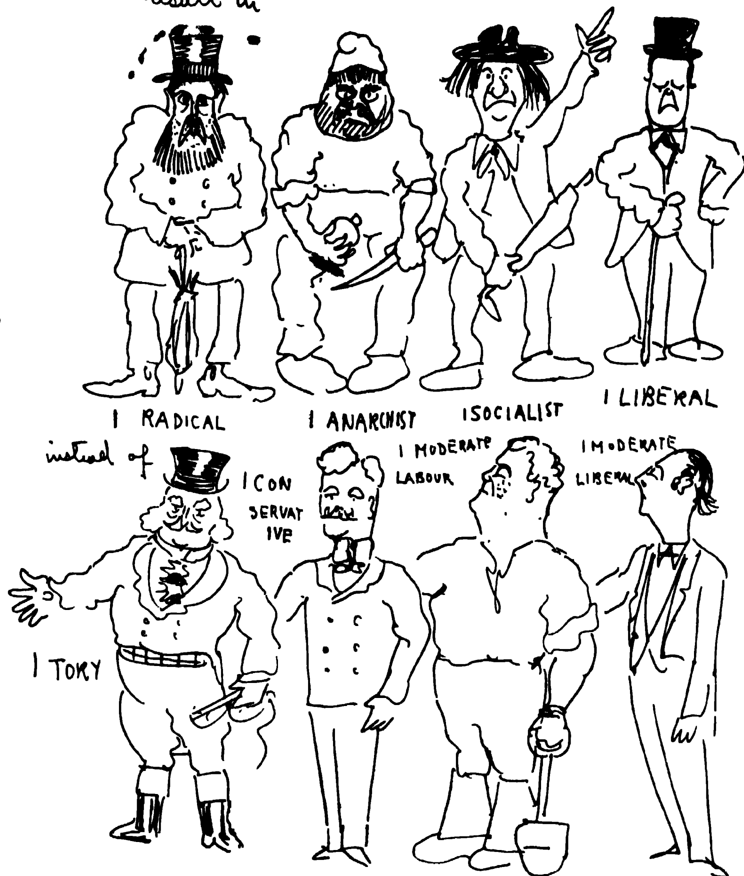
My brother, General Sir H. C. Lowther, moved the Address in the Commons and made his maiden speech on this occasion. He referred to the fact that as his constituency of North Westmorland would, under my redistribution proposals, disappear, his feelings towards the perpetrator of his destruction were not altogether fraternal, but I am happy to be able to record that this act of fratricide on my part left no ill feeling, and that when I eventually retired, he stepped into my shoes as Member for the adjoining constituency of Mid-Cumberland.

At the beginning of March my colleagues and I took up the task of selecting 100 seats for the experiment

of P.R. My coadjutors were Lord Dundas (a Scottish judge), Sir Samuel Provis (an old official of the Local Government Board) and Sir Thomas Elliot (lately of the Board of Agriculture), together with the indefatigable Sir Walter Jerred as our secretary. After selection, we had to go through the whole process of advertising, of holding enquiries, of examining our inspectors' reports, and of coming to a final decision. It was remarkable with what unanimity the localities all agreed that, however desirable P.R. might be elsewhere, it was not desired in the particular constituency selected. Eventually we made a selection in England, Scotland and Wales of agricultural and industrial seats, choosing them fairly, both in boroughs and counties, from different parts of the country; but when the proposals were eventually submitted to Parliament, they were not accepted and were, to use an expression which was then coming into usage, "turned down."

During the passage of the Bill I had received letters from some Members in grave anxiety as to the future political complexion of the proposed new Parliamentary divisions. One of the most amusing was from my cousin, Sir Mark Sykes, who accompanied it with a sketch of the probable Members for Hull under the new proposals and under existing circumstances.

As I shall have little more to say about my connection with these electoral reforms, which had occupied so much of my time and attention, I will only refer here to a final function of a convivial character, when the members of the Electoral Reform Conference gave a dinner in the House of Commons to several Members and others, who had taken part in helping to put the Bill upon the Statute Book. The latter included Mr. Asquith, Sir George Cave, Mr. Hayes Fisher, Lord Peel,



Drawing by Sir Mark Sykes, M.P. of the effect of redistribution on the Hull Constituencies

Sir Arthur Thring and Sir Walter Jerred. The last-named unfortunately never lived to see the results of the Act, which he had done so much to promote, put into effect at the General Election, for he died on his way to India, whither he was proceeding on official duty, having been taken suddenly ill in the train on the Mount Cenis route. He was an admirable public servant and has left an abiding memory to all of us who were brought into contact with him in connection with the various stages of the Representation of the People Act 1918.

On the 6th of March the House and Ireland suffered a great loss in the death of Mr. John Redmond. After serving as a clerk in the House of Commons he entered it as M.P. two years before I did; but I witnessed practically the whole of his political career. From the year 1891 he had been leader of the Irish Party. He was a great Irishman and never lost sight of the ends which he and his party had in view; but he was not, as many of his friends were, anti-English. He understood the English character and notwithstanding their abhorrence of his policy, he was respected by Englishmen. When the war broke out he showed his whole-hearted loyalty to the Empire, both in speech and in action. As a speaker he was eloquent and forcible, and his inclination was always towards moderation and constitutional methods. Under the stinging criticisms of Mr. T. Healy and Mr. W. O'Brien he bore himself in a dignified manner and seemed to reprove them more in sorrow than in anger. I had naturally many communications and consultations with him, and always found him reasonable, reliable, and in real difficulties helpful. Once at least I had to suspend him, but nevertheless we always remained on the best of terms, and it was with the sincerest feelings of regret and the deepest sense of loss that I formed one

of the immense congregation which attended his funeral mass in Westminster Cathedral two days after his death.

Soon afterwards, I received a letter from Mr. Stephen Gwynn, an Irish Nationalist M.P., asking me for the date at which Mr. Redmond had joined the House of Commons as a clerk (I think it was in 18[illegible]3), and he added: "Is there any record of another man whose life was so completely spent in the service of the House of Commons, I wonder?" He was kind enough to add the following passage, which I hope I may be forgiven for recording: "Of course you know that Redmond, the best possible judge, always said that no one in his experience had come near your standard of excellence. I think it was due to his sense of what you had been able to do for the House of Commons that he had certainly before his mind the idea of serving as Speaker in an Irish Parliament. This is only an inference from things that he said in the Convention—but I am sure it is a sound one."

The day on which the big German advance began against the Western front, the House rose for the Easter recess, and my wife and I took the opportunity of a few days' respite to pay what had now become my annual visit to Bath as a prophylactic against my old enemy the gout. Horace Walpole, who was a great sufferer from this complaint, as readers of his letters know, used to say that the gout was a remedy and not a disease. It may be so, but, as an old sufferer, I prefer Bath, and I have found periodical visits thither the best preventive against the ravages of the disease or the employment of the "remedy."

Just before our visit we were honoured with an invitation to luncheon *en petit comité* with Their

Majesties the King and Queen, the only others present being the Prince of Wales, just back from the front, and Prince Henry. The war and politics formed naturally the chief subjects of our discussion, and I noticed that the severe sumptuary restrictions, which were then applicable to all, were rigorously enforced at the Royal table. In the words of Horace, they equally affected

"Pauperum tabernas Regumque turres."

At Bath we found our old acquaintance Mr. Frederick Harrison on the rampage. From having been an extreme democrat, almost a tribune of the people, he had now become a severe despot. After listening together to a pianoforte recital by Mark Hambourg, he sent me the following scheme which he entitled "The Ideal Government, by a Revolutionary Conservative—inspired by Mark Hambourg's 'Tarantula.' Easter Eve 1918":

The House of Commons votes on account £000,000,000,000.
The King prorogues Parliament for duration of the war.
Committee of Public Safety installed.
Its decrees to be Orders under D.O.R.A.
President, with powers of a Prime Minister: the Speaker.
War: Sir W. Robertson.
Navy: Lord Jellicoe.
Ireland: Sir E. Carson. Military Service Act extended to Ireland.
Attorney-General: D. Ll. George } to address meetings and rouse the country.
Solicitor-General: H. H. Asquith }

Air: Lord Northcliffe.
Works: Lords Cowdray and Pirrie.
Law Courts, Universities, Schools above elementary: Closed during the war.
No newspapers or public prints to issue telegrams nor to comment on public affairs.
Official telegrams to be posted three times daily at door of every P.O.
Both telegrams and comments to be settled by Colonel Repington.

I do not know how far he was in earnest in all his proposals, but they give a fairly accurate representation of the views he then held, and however impossible his suggestions and schemes, it was refreshing to see and hear a man of so great an age as he had then reached so full of vigour and initiative.

We also had the pleasure of meeting M. Raemaekers, the celebrated Dutch cartoonist, upon whose head the Germans had set a price. His studio was full of many cartoons, designed in a most caustic not to say brutal fashion, and included his most recent drawing representing the bombardment by a long-range German gun of a church in Paris during the three-hour service on Good Friday, when no less than seventy of the congregation were killed and ninety wounded.

Lord Breadalbane, like myself a regular visitor to Bath, was also there, and as he was a brother Commissioner of the Caledonian Canal, we had several talks about that waterway. It had been taken over from us by the Admiralty and was being then used for some secret naval purposes, of which we were not informed; but as the matter had been carried through in a hurry, the conditions upon which it had been commandeered

and the arrangements for the payment of our staff and for the substitution of a monetary grant in lieu of the dues, had been left rather vague and required a good deal of unravelling before they were finally adjusted.

CHAPTER XXVIII

1918 (*contd.*)

Compulsory Service in Ireland—The Maurice Debate—Service at St. Margaret's—Jesse Collings—The Armistice—Dissolution—President Wilson—Sinn Fein and the House of Commons.

Immediately on my return to town from Bath, I was called into consultation with Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Bonar Law as to expediting the passage of the Military Service Bill through the House. The introduction of this Bill, which provided for raising the age for military service to fifty, and for bringing Ireland within the purview of the compulsory service enactments, coincided with the worst period of the war, when the Germans were within a few miles of Amiens and the danger of the main line of communication being cut was imminent. The Bill was stoutly and somewhat riotously resisted by the Nationalists, who, when Sir Auckland Geddes, the Director of National Service, rose to reply for the Government, loudly called for Mr. Duke, the Irish Secretary, and it was only after using all the conciliatory and persuasive powers at my command that I could obtain a hearing for the former Minister. The Bill passed with less difficulty than I had anticipated, for I had warned the Prime Minister and Mr. Bonar Law of the hornets' nest which they were stirring. They were fully aware of the hostility with which it would be met, but were determined. As is well known, the sections of the Act and of former Acts applying compulsory service to Ireland were, however,

never enforced, owing to the violent opposition to them raised by the Roman Catholic Church.

One of the most excited scenes which I can remember took place on the 9th of May, when Mr. Asquith moved for a select committee to enquire into the charges made by General Maurice against the Prime Minister, in a letter which he had sent to the Press. General Maurice occupied an important position on the head-quarter staff. In a letter to *The Times* he challenged the accuracy of several Ministerial statements, saying that they gave "a totally misleading impression"; he challenged as "incorrect" a statement of the Prime Minister that the numbers of the army were greater on the 1st of January 1918 than on the 1st of January 1917, and directly contradicted another statement of the Prime Minister as to the number of British troops in the East. The Government at first offered an enquiry by two judges, but eventually gave a day for Mr. Asquith's motion and treated it as a vote of censure. There was a very full and excited House. It had been given out that there was a probability of a Government defeat, and both inside and outside the House feeling ran high. Sir Hedworth Meux had made a passionate attack upon the Government, and so violent was he in manner, if not in matter, that at one moment I had to interpose and suggest that the demeanour of a Hyde Park orator was hardly suitable for such an august personage. I am glad to think that Sir Hedworth took my intervention in good part and laughed with the rest of the House. The Prime Minister in his reply showed that the figures which he had quoted were official figures, some of them supplied by General Maurice himself, and that the disposition of our forces, of which General Maurice had complained, had been

arrived at between Sir Douglas Haig and General Pétain without the intervention of the Government at all. The motion was rejected by 187, after Mr. Lloyd George had pleaded for a cessation of "this sniping" at a moment of great national peril.

The incident of this motion and the division upon it attracted a great deal of attention in the country. I was informed that in my neighbourhood in Suffolk, a quiet, unemotional part of the world, quite a crowd had congregated round the post-office, in order to await the news of the result. The division list was subsequently, at the time of the General Election, taken as the standard by which the supporters of the Coalition were to be segregated from the Opposition in considering their claims for the patronage or otherwise of the joint leaders of the Coalition Party.

A few days later died Lord Courtney of Penwith. During my early years in the House of Commons he had been one of its most prominent Members; not a leader, for he had no following, but a man of independent views, expressed forcibly and with great courage. He had sacrificed his position in the Ministry of 1884 because Mr. Gladstone had refused to include proportional representation in his 1884 Reform Bill. For a time he was a Unionist and held the position of Chairman of Ways and Means. There was no *suaviter in modo* about him, but plenty of *fortiter in re*. He did not "suffer fools gladly," but conducted the business of the Committee of the whole House with great ability and determination. When Speaker Peel resigned, in 1895, Mr. Courtney was privately suggested by the Government as his successor, but the opposition to him was so widespread that his name was withdrawn, and although he sat in the 1895 Parliament and occasionally

took part in debates, he was not selected by the Unionists in 1900 to contest his old seat of Bodmin, and went to the Lords. When I was appointed to his post of Chairman of Ways and Means in 1895, I occasionally sought his advice, and it was always given readily. I remember that he once referred to my conduct in the Chair as being "adroit," but at first I had felt that he was a severe critic, as a past-master of the craft of chairmanship.

During the last weeks of Mr. Asquith's Coalition Government I had received a visit from an Irish Member, distinguished for his patriotic interest in imperial matters and the exalted estimate of his own capacity, who informed me that he had convinced himself that under Mr. Asquith's administration we should never win the war. I asked him what he proposed to do about it? In reply he said that he was about to use every endeavour to turn him out. I pointed out that it was a serious matter to displace the Prime Minister at such a moment, but that of course he was entitled, within the rules of Parliamentary procedure, to use such means for the purpose as he might think it right to employ, but before proceeding to extremities it would be wise to decide upon the best man to succeed him. He answered that he had done so and that his choice had fallen upon Mr. Lloyd George. This came to pass "according to plan," but how far my friend had had any influence on the situation is problematical. However, in the spring of 1918, this gentleman came to see me again, but this time he was convinced that Mr. Lloyd George would never win the war. Almost identically the same conversation recurred. However, when I asked him who was to replace Mr. Lloyd George, he drew himself up, tapped himself on the breast and

answered, "Myself." It was very rude of me, but the idea was so ludicrous that I am afraid I burst out with a loud guffaw. The would-be Prime Minister thereupon said: "Well, you asked me the question, and I gave you the answer." There was no more to be said and "that was that."

Before the Whitsun recess a case tried before Mr. Justice Darling, in which Miss Maud Allan was the prosecutrix and Mr. Pemberton Billing, M.P., the defendant, had attracted a great deal of public attention. All kinds of seemingly irrelevant issues had been raised. The character of a Mrs. Villiers Stuart, the contents of a so-called "Black Book," the pro-German inclinations of many public personalities, and various other matters had been discussed, and Mr. Pemberton Billing, the defendant, had "let himself go" and caused what the Press calls "amazing scenes in Court." Mr. Justice Darling had not succeeded in restraining him nor in adding the case of "R. *v.* Billing" to the list of his judicial triumphs, and Mr. Pemberton Billing won his case. Some few days after his return to the House I had occasion to intervene in some disorderly observations which he was making, and remarked, paraphrasing the interjections which judges sometimes make, that "This is not a Court of Justice but the House of Commons." Either on this day or a few days later I was obliged to suspend Mr. Pemberton Billing temporarily from the service of the House.

On the 6th of July I was present at the Guildhall when the King and Queen were presented with a gift of £53,000 and a Charles II silver tankard in celebration of Their Majesties' silver wedding, and two days later the House voted an Address of congratulation upon the interesting occasion. Their Majesties gave a banquet

at Buckingham Palace on the following day, to which my wife and I were bidden. All the Dominion Premiers, the principal Ministers, the Chiefs of the Army and Navy then in London, and the members of the Royal Family were present. It was my good fortune to sit next to General Smuts, for whom I had always had the greatest admiration, and after dinner the King told me how, when he had knighted my brother Cecil, whose nickname in the Army had been "Meat," he had felt inclined to say, "Rise, Sir Loin."

One Sunday my wife and I went to stay with Mr. and Mrs. W. Astor at Cliveden. There was a large camp of Canadian soldiers in the park, to whom Mrs. Astor played the part of lady bountiful, and in the afternoon I witnessed a game of baseball there. Accustomed to the stately and dignified conduct of English crowds watching cricket matches, I was surprised and rather shocked at the fusillade of incessant and derogatory ejaculations which was fired by the onlookers at the performers. However, they did not appear to be disconcerted but took it in good part, and I suppose it is all part of the game as played across the water.

Our visit to Cliveden was coincident with the first advance of the Allied forces, which, beginning at Soissons on a 25-mile front, eventually developed into a general advance and the complete rout of the German army.

At the end of the summer Session Sir Arthur Nicholson, Clerk Assistant, resigned his position. He had served forty-three years as a clerk in the House of Commons, nineteen of them at the table. I had always found him a very industrious, capable and reliable public servant. Notwithstanding the terrible accident to his eyesight, he had stuck pluckily to his work, and even when in

the war he lost two sons killed in action, he kept his end up and never missed a day's duty. It was with much regret that I accepted his resignation.

During the preceding summer and in this year it was my habit to get a ride every morning at 7 a.m. with my daughter, who had to be at her office at 9. One day, as I was starting out from the Speaker's House, I saw that the door of Westminster Hall, where the roof was undergoing repair, stood open, and I rode in. I suppose it was the only time that anybody had ridden into that historic hall since the day when the champion Dymoke at George IV's Coronation banquet had ridden in and thrown down his glove in challenge to all and sundry to dispute the King's lawful right to the throne; but I saw a very different sight to that upon which Dymoke had gazed, for the place was cumbered with scaffolding and beams in various stages of decay, and I think my horse was not displeased when, following Dymoke's example, I backed him out again.

On the 4th of August, which happened to be a Sunday, it had been arranged that the Members of both Houses of Parliament should attend a service at St. Margaret's, Westminster, in memory of the declaration of war. The arrangements were in the hands of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Chancellor and myself, with our respective staffs. We had several meetings to arrange details, and on the previous day had a rehearsal of the ceremony. Our House met and marched in procession to the church, being followed by the Lords, also in procession. The King and Queen and Queen Alexandra, with other members of the Royal Family, occupied the front seats on the north side of the nave, the Lords being behind them and the Commons occupying the seats on the south side. Following the pre-

cedent of the Coronation Service, the maces of the Lords and of the Commons, which were placed immediately in front of us, were covered as soon as the King entered the church. I read the first lesson and the Lord Chancellor the second. A special Litany was used on this occasion and a very touching hymn sung, written by a former M.P., Mr. Arkwright, beginning "O valiant hearts who to your glory came." The Archbishop preached the sermon, the service was very striking, and all the arrangements worked like clockwork. I wrote a line to the Archbishop to thank him for the very appropriate and moving sermon which he had given us, and in reply received a letter from him in the course of which he said: "I thought the whole occasion impressive by reason partly of its very simplicity. Not the least important of its incidents was the reading of the lessons by the heads of our two Houses. So far as I know, that is quite unique." The Lord Chancellor and I wore our wigs and gold gowns.

Four days later, on the 8th of August, Parliament rose for the autumn recess. The Session had been a busy one and no less than forty Bills of varying importance had received the Royal assent. The improved situation on the Western front seemed to show at last some blue sky through the black clouds which had so long darkened the horizon, and spirits were beginning to revive.

About this time a veteran Parliamentarian, Mr. Jesse Collings, celebrated his diamond wedding. He was a wonderful example of a man who, although of the humblest origin, had by sheer ability and determination, risen to become a member of Her Majesty's Government, a Privy Councillor, and a leading authority in the Commons on agricultural, and especially agricultural housing, questions. After having been Mayor of Bir-

mingham, he entered the House in 1880 as M.P. for Ipswich, was responsible for the so-called "Three acres and cow" policy, on which he turned out Lord Salisbury's Government in 1886, became a Liberal Unionist in the same year, allied himself closely to Mr. Chamberlain and for a number of years took an active part in the proceedings of the House. His age, *bonhomie*, independence and obvious sincerity made him generally popular. I wrote to congratulate him on the celebration of his diamond wedding and received this reply:

SOUTHFIELD,
EDGBASTON.
8th July 1918.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER,—

It is very kind of you to write me a letter on my diamond wedding. I wish I could reply with my own hand, but I regret I cannot. We have had sixty years of happy life without a break, and for that we are thankful. Though disabled and in my ninetieth year, I am still able to follow your doings in Parliament. Again thanking you,

I am sincerely yours,
JESSE COLLINGS.

Mr. Collings survived another two years and died in October 1920.

When I got home to Campsea Ashe, I found plenty of occupation awaiting me, and I promptly set to work as an agricultural labourer. We were very short-handed, owing to the call made on agricultural labour by the military authorities. In accordance with the requests of the County Agricultural Committee, I had, somewhat regretfully, ploughed up seven acres of the park, but was rewarded with a fine crop of peas; and as the weather was propitious, we got them in in good order. The Suffolk agricultural labourers had seized the moment of the harvest and of England's direst necessity to go on strike, and they were followed by

the tramway and omnibus men in London, by some miners, by the Metropolitan Police, by the Lancashire cotton operatives, by the railway men, and by the Clyde shipwrights. None but the first-named of these affected us much in Suffolk, but we got over the trouble by calling to our assistance some Eton and other schoolboys and by enlisting the services of our parson and several other novices, who lent a hand in the necessary farm work.

At the end of harvest I went up to Cumberland in order to make the acquaintance of my new constituents in the neighbourhood of Cockermouth who had been thrown into my old constituency, and to bid farewell to those now transferred to the North Cumberland division. Whilst staying at Lowther I heard an amusing story about Archbishop Temple. He was examining candidates for Holy Orders, and in order to satisfy himself as to the qualifications of one of them he said that he would feign illness, threw himself down on a couch and asked the candidate to proceed as though he had been called in, in his spiritual capacity, to minister to him. The candidate approached the couch, looked at the Archbishop for a moment, put his hand on the archiepiscopal brow and said: "Now, Fred, you're drunk again—jump up at once and get back to work."

The House met again on the 15th of October, and it soon became apparent that, the war having taken a favourable turn and our general advance having progressed rapidly, the end was in sight and a dissolution likely. A resolution to admit women to Parliament, following logically upon their admission to the franchise, was proposed and carried by 174 to 25. On the 28th of October, following upon a resolution of the House, women were for the first time admitted on the same

terms as men to the Strangers' Galleries. The women were thus placed, so far as attendance in the House of Commons was concerned, in an even better position than men, for besides sharing the Strangers' Galleries, they also had the Ladies' Gallery reserved for their special use.

During October our time was occupied by a number of Bills of secondary importance dealing with Tithe Redemption, Midwives' Registration, Scottish Education, Teachers' Superannuation, Naval and Military War Pensions, Housing, and so forth. In the meanwhile the position of Bulgaria and of Austria was crumbling, and on the 8th of November Field Marshal Foch presented to the German delegates, who had sued for an armistice, the terms of the Allies.

I spent the week-end from the 9th to the 11th of November in the country, but on reaching the outskirts of London soon after 11 a.m. on the latter day, saw at once by the display of bunting visible from the train that the Armistice had been signed. On reaching the Speaker's House about 12.30, I found a call awaiting me from the Prime Minister and proceeded to Downing Street. Here I met the Prime Minister and Mr. Bonar Law. Shortly after my arrival Mr. Balfour came in. It was the first time since the Armistice had been signed that they had met. Contrary to my expectation, Mr. Balfour was excited and voluble, but Mr. Lloyd George was calm and pensive. After mutual congratulations had been exchanged, the question, in respect of which I had been summoned, was mooted. What was to be done in the House that day? The Prime Minister had a happy inspiration. It was idle to talk of business or of going through the usual routine: there was only one thing to be done, the House must

go to church and give thanks to God for the cessation of the war, and it was left to me to make arrangements for the service at St. Margaret's. I hastened off to find the rector, Canon Carnegie, but he was not at home, and I was in despair. Fortunately, on my way to the Speaker's House I met him in the street and we had a consultation. The boys of the choir were available, but the men were dispersed and impossible to gather together at so short a notice. However, we decided to do what we could, and in the end all went well. Meeting at the usual hour, the Prime Minister announced the terms of the Armistice, and in moving the adjournment indicated the proposed programme. After our recent precedent of the Commemoration Service on the 4th of August, a procession of Members was formed and crossed over to the church. The service, in the absence of most of the members of the choir, was simple, a few suitable hymns were sung, a lesson read, and appropriate prayers recited. It was an impressive service, chiefly from its simplicity and from the hearty manner in which the large congregation had sung the old and soul-stirring hymns of thanksgiving. We returned to the House and dispersed.

During the next few days I saw nothing of the wonderful scenes in the streets after nightfall, when the Mafeking rejoicings were repeated in an intensified and prolonged form, for the House sat late almost every night and the remaining business of the Session was pushed through as rapidly as possible. On the 14th of November a dissolution was announced.

There remained one important function still to be performed, which required some arrangement and organization. It was decided that both Houses should present identical addresses of congratulation to the

King in state. His Majesty usually receives the Members of the two Houses in the House of Lords, but this was clearly too small a chamber for such a function. Westminster Hall, the natural place for such a gathering, was cumbered up with scaffolding and woodwork, and was not available, so it was determined to make use of the Royal Gallery. On the 19th of November accordingly the House, having met half an hour earlier than usual, went in procession to the Royal Gallery, where the Peers were already assembled, and occupying the whole of the right-hand half of the hall, awaited the King's arrival. When he was seated the Lord Chancellor presented the Lords' address, introducing at the same time the mover and seconder, and I followed with that of the Commons, presenting Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Asquith. The King made a long reply, which occupied some twenty-five minutes, and then, after bowing to the assembly, left. We then returned to our Chamber, and after I had changed my gold gown for my usual suit, proceeded with our business.

On the 21st of November, the day of the surrender of the German Fleet, Parliament was prorogued with the customary formalities and was dissolved.

Thus ended the longest Parliament of modern times. Elected in December 1910, it had almost completed eight years. The work which it had carried through was gigantic in volume as well as in importance. There had been an autumn Session every year but one (1913). It had passed the Parliament Act, the Home Rule Act, the Welsh Disestablishment Act, the Reform Act, and a mass of first-class legislation caused by the exigencies of the war. To attempt even to enumerate one-half of the other measures which it had enacted would occupy an intolerable amount of space. Having begun

by limiting its existence to five years, it had frequently prolonged its own life. The Irish Nationalist Party which, at its commencement, was the dominant party, had crumbled, and at its conclusion was destined to disappear altogether. When history comes to be written, the 1910–1918 Parliament will rank as one of the most brilliant, hard-working and remarkable Parliaments which ever left their impress on the Empire; but as this book does not profess to be either historical or critical, it is beyond my province to attempt any further appreciation of its work. I will content myself with this personal note, that some years before its demise not only did I know by sight and name every Member of the House, but I believe that with my eyes shut (which they never were) I could have named every Member by the sound of his voice. I also believe that, although I had had differences with many, I separated from my colleagues without leaving any personal animosities behind.

Under the new Act the nominations of all candidates took place on the same day, and in Cumberland were held at Carlisle, the capital city of the county, instead of at the chief towns of the four divisions. I was again returned unopposed on the 4th of December, and it was an additional pleasure to me that my eldest son, Major Christopher W. Lowther, was also elected unopposed for the neighbouring division of North Cumberland. The contested elections took place throughout the country ten days later, but owing to the necessity of collecting the votes of absent voters at the front, the declarations of the polls were not made until the 28th of December. On that day the Lord Mayor had received President Wilson at the Guildhall, and had given a luncheon party in his honour at the Mansion House.

At the luncheon I had sat next to Mr. Asquith, who seemed in good form and quite unconscious, so far as I could perceive, of the doom impending over his Party and himself, to be announced within a few moments of the conclusion of our repast. The evening papers showed that the Liberal Party had been reduced to 26, that Mr. Asquith himself had lost his seat, and that most of his colleagues had suffered the same fate, the general result being that the Coalitionists in the new Parliament would muster 484 and the Opposition, composed of all the other parties put together, 222. Labour, on the other hand, had increased from 38 to 59, but the Nationalists had dwindled from 77 to 7. One woman only, Countess Markievicz, had been elected.

As I have indicated, this was the time when President Wilson paid a visit to England. He arrived in London on Boxing Day and I was present at Charing Cross with the Prime Minister, Mr. Balfour, Lord Milner, Sir Auckland Geddes and Sir E. Robertson, when the King and Queen received him and Mrs. Wilson there. On the following day, after a banquet at Buckingham Palace, given by Their Majesties in his honour, I had the pleasure of some conversation with him. He was a Cumberland man, his parents had lived at Carlisle, and we talked for some time about the beauties of the Lake country and the superiority of Cumberland over all other counties, in which sentiment we were completely in accord. I had a further opportunity of again meeting him at a dinner at the Prime Minister's in Downing Street just before he left town to pay a lightning visit to the home of his parents. At that dinner the President had the opportunity of meeting Sir Robert Borden, General Botha, Mr. Hughes, the Maharajah of Bikanir, Mr. Lloyd (the Prime Minister of Newfoundland), General

Smuts and Sir S. P. Sinha, who were all about to be his colleagues at the Paris Conference.

One of the questions, which immediately arose, was whether the Sinn Fein Members, who now numbered seventy-three, would take their seats in the new Parliament, and how they would get over the difficulty of taking the Oath of Allegiance. Mr. Bonar Law was of opinion, and he proved to be right, that they would not do so, but opinion was much divided. I had received a letter from Mr. Bottomley informing me that it had come to his knowledge that the Sinn Feiners intended to be present at the first meeting of our House, before the moment comes for Members to be sworn, and that by concerted action they would render all proceedings, including the election of a Speaker, impossible. I thought it my duty to interrogate him and sought an interview. He reaffirmed the contents of his letter to me, and acting upon the assumption that his information might be correct, I examined the question with Sir Courtenay Ilbert and some other legal friends whose advice I sought. I came to the conclusion that, if such an eventuality should occur, the Clerk of the House, who is the presiding officer at the first meeting of a new House, is by common law armed with sufficient authority to conduct the meeting in an orderly fashion, and to permit such debate as he considers reasonable and make sure that the purpose for which the meeting is held is not nullified or rendered abortive by clamour or disturbance. I discussed this matter with Sir C. P. Ilbert and he fully agreed, and was prepared, if necessary, to take that course.

Within a few days before the close of the year I lost by death some old and valued friends. Sir Alfred Scott Gatty, Garter King-of-Arms, had been a close

friend since the days of the People's Entertainment Society, when together we had week by week given free concerts and entertainments in many of the poorer parts of London. He was a good amateur musician and had composed many songs which his audiences always enjoyed, whether he sang them as solos or as duets with Lady Gatty. My humble share in these entertainments had been to recite. When the People's Entertainment Society was merged in the Gordon League, our bond of union was loosened, but I occasionally visited him at the Heralds' College and he was always delighted to show me some of the heraldic and genealogical treasures of the College of Arms.

In the last week of the year my brother-in-law, Lord Stratheden and Campbell, died at the age of eighty-nine. He had not inherited the brilliant gifts of his father, the Lord Chancellor, but he and his wife, my wife's eldest sister, were well known in London society, where they were favourites, and had a large circle of intimate and faithful friends. He was a tall, bald-headed man, and wore the old-fashioned side whiskers. Some of his more intimate friends had christened him "Ally Sloper," but whilst he bore some resemblance to that mythical personage, the appellation was really a gross caricature.

I was amused by a story which I heard about this period. A man who had been engaged by Sir Henry Irving as a "super" to appear amongst the gnomes and imps in the Brocken scene of "Faust," was telling a friend how Sir Henry conducted the rehearsals, and how on one occasion he had called out to the crowd on the stage: "Remember, gentlemen, that you are in 'Ell and not in 'Ampstead." "Oh," said the friend, "I did not know that Irving was in the habit of dropping his h's."

Another story, which appealed to me in my capacity of a chairman, was told me by a friend who was present on the occasion in question. At a meeting at the Mansion House, at which Mr. Balfour was to speak on Serbia, the Lord Mayor was to have presided but was temporarily detained elsewhere and his place was taken by a substitute. This gentleman quite capably made excuses for him, protested his own imperfections and so forth, but wound up by saying with a sort of *air goguenard*, "I can assure you, ladies and gentlemen, that when the Lord Mayor does arrive I shall be a great deal better pleased to see him than you will be."

A case of mixed metaphors was also brought to my notice, which deserves to be recorded. A temporary public servant, who was concerned with some inter-departmental dispute, wrote to his chief as follows: "If I wish to put up a fight, I will do so off my own bat and fight with clean weapons and on a clean ground, but I will not be made a catspaw of by anyone with their own axe to grind." As my informant wrote to me: "Grammar apart—the rapid change from cricket to duelling and thence to applied science first in the form of zoology and then of metallurgy is quite agreeable."

CHAPTER XXIX

1919

Sir R. Borden a Skinner—Who is to become H.M. Opposition?—Sir Mark Sykes—Academy Dinner—Offered Post of Ambassador to U.S.A.—Precedence of the Speaker—Treaty of Versailles and M. Clemenceau—Peace Celebrations—Prince of Wales at Speaker's House—Conference on Devolution—Lady Astor's Hat.

The first function of the year which I attended was at the Skinners' Hall, when the freedom of the Company was conferred upon two of our distinguished Dominion Prime Ministers, Sir Robert Borden and General Botha. The arrangements were hurriedly made, in order to suit the convenience of the new freemen, who were about to leave for the Peace Conference in Paris, and instead of a dinner to celebrate the occasion, a luncheon was given, to which Lord Milner and I were bidden to meet the new Members of the Company. We all had to "pay our footing" in speeches. Sir Robert Borden, with a powerful voice and in grandiloquent tones, rolled out magnificent periods on the unity of the British Empire and the advance in the status of the Dominions by their participation in the Paris Conference. General Botha, somewhat diffident about his capabilities of making a speech in English, soon showed that his diffidence was unnecessary, for he made a modest and charming speech which completely captivated his audience. Sir Robert Borden has a *penchant* for stories and, as I happened to sit next to him at table, he told me several, of which I only remember the following: A *poilu* who had drunk more than he could well carry,

was endeavouring to mount his horse. After one or two failures, he called upon all the saints in the Calendar. whose names he could remember, to assist him, and made another attempt. This time he was more than successful, for he fell over on the far side, and again addressing the saints, he said with an oath, "I called on you to help, but I did not want you all to push at the same moment." Another story was of two Scotchmen drinking together, with the result that in the morning Donald complained that Mac had drunk so hard all night that at last he (Donald) could not see him.

Before the new Parliament met I was confronted with the difficulty of having to decide which Party constituted His Majesty's Opposition. The Liberals only mustered 26, whilst Labour numbered 59. The latter, therefore, claimed to have become the official Opposition. I was interviewed by Mr. Adamson, who was then the chairman of the Labour Party, and strongly urged their claims. He argued that there were 59 Labour Members representing a distinct and independent Party, that Labour candidates had received the support of more than 2¼ million voters at the recent Election, that the Liberals numbered only 26, and that even those 26 were only a minority of a Party which was identified with and formed part of the Coalition Government. On the other hand, some Members of the Liberal Party argued to me that their discomfiture was only temporary and that they were the real "Simon pure," with great historical traditions behind them, which should not be lightly set aside by reason of a passing failure at the polls. It was a difficult situation. I pointed out to Mr. Adamson that my share in determining the question of the leadership of His Majesty's Opposition was a very small one, and was limited to

determining who on the front Opposition bench should, every Thursday, ask the formal question as to future business; that if the question of determining the official Opposition was to be solved by numbers, the Sinn Fein Party, who had not then decided whether they would come to Westminster or not, outnumbered the Labour Party by a dozen or more; and that the application of a strict arithmetical rule might lead to some embarrassment and might compel me, in the event of the Opposition parties becoming about equal in numbers, through the decisions of by-elections, to resort to a weekly census. I therefore solved it in the usual British fashion by a compromise, in the nature of Solomon's judgment, suggesting that the leadership should be divided between Sir Donald Maclean and Mr. Adamson. This course was adopted, and during the duration of the Parliament Sir Donald and Mr. Adamson used in alternate weeks to exercise their privilege as leader, of asking the formal questions as to the future business of the House, the only Parliamentary act which by tradition is the prerogative of the leader of His Majesty's Opposition. In the matter of initiating or winding up debates on behalf of their parties, they both took part, dividing the honours between them so far as possible. When Mr. Asquith was returned as M.P. for Paisley, Sir Donald Maclean naturally vacated the leadership of the Liberal Party, but he had done his work well, had always proved adequate to the tasks imposed on him, and made himself popular in all quarters.

On the 4th of February, when we met, Colonel Mildmay proposed and Sir Henry Dalziel seconded my re-election as Speaker. The former was an old friend of Cambridge days, who had been for many years a Member but had never taken the prominent part in debates for

which his abilities, experience and power of expression qualified him. He caused some amusement by likening me to a rider on a vivacious mount, whose firm grip of the saddle and lightness of hands enabled him to control and guide his fiery steed. Sir Henry Dalziel was one of the senior Members. He had always been a free lance, incisive and effective in speech, holding advanced views and never backward in criticizing his own party as well as his opponents. He was never in office, though eminently capable of administration.

I had for some little time been considering the date of my probable retirement and had even inspected several houses in town which appeared to be suitable for my family and myself when the retirement came. I had now held the Speakership for fourteen years, the average length of service of my immediate predecessors having been eleven years. I had had, so far as length of sittings was involved, a more strenuous experience than they. Autumn Sessions, which before my time occurred at distant intervals, had now become annual institutions. During the war the sittings of the House had been almost continuous, and I had also done a good deal of extra-mural Parliamentary work. Although my health had improved since I had discovered the virtues of Bath, I was getting tired of the daily routine and the heavy responsibilities attaching to the office, and was longing for a real holiday. On the other hand, as I had seen the beginning of the war, I was anxious not to miss the signature of the peace. It seemed desirable, as there had been a great change of personnel in the membership of the House, that it should not be necessary to begin the new Parliament with a new Speaker, but that the traditions of the office should be carried on until the new House had settled down into its customary

lines. Accordingly I agreed to continue my service in the Chair, but with the notification that I should before long seek to be released from it.

The new Parliament was a dull one, if brilliancy in debate, combativeness, obstructive tactics and strong party feeling are to be reckoned the necessary attributes of a bright Parliament. I thought the 1918 to 1923 House of Commons an eminently businesslike assembly, composed of men who, for the most part, only spoke when they had something to say, and spoke on their own topics with authority and knowledge. There were a few "snipers," who by reason of the paucity of their numbers had to be constantly in action and so acquired a fame which, if the force had been more numerous, the individuals would not have attained. I was disappointed with the Labour Party, who were slack in attendance and ineffective in discussing details, though capable of making good second reading speeches. Mr. Lloyd George is said to have observed of the House: "When I look in front I think I am addressing a Trade Union Congress, and when I look behind, an Association of the Chambers of Commerce."

Sir Mark Sykes died in Paris on the 17th of January. He had gone there to attend the Conference and to place at the disposal of the British authorities his unrivalled knowledge of Palestine, Irak and the Asiatic provinces of Turkey. Although he had only been a short time in the House, he had made a distinct impression by the originality of his views, his wide knowledge of the particular sphere which he had made his own, his power of humorous illustration, the earnestness of his convictions and the facile pencil with which he would dash off caricatures of amusing Parliamentary incidents. He was also a learned and painstaking

writer and had written a ponderous volume on the history of Irak. As an amateur actor and clever mimic he was always a welcome guest. He had arranged a treaty with the French known as the Sykes Picot treaty, and was reported to be the author of the flowery proclamation issued on the occasion of our capture of Baghdad. Whether he would ever have developed into a solid statesman is perhaps questionable. I doubt if he would ever have conformed to the restrictions and solicitude for the views of others which such a position demands, but he was a great loss to the House, with whom he was a general favourite.

The first business with which we grappled was, as usual, an alteration of some of the Rules of Procedure, with a view of expediting public business by permitting the sittings of the Standing Committees to continue simultaneously with the sittings of the House. This was accepted and is now a part of the ordinary procedure. Some other suggestions, not being favourably received, were withdrawn. A Transport Bill, an Aliens Bill, a Rent and Mortgage Restriction Bill, and measures to provide for the gradual demobilization of the Forces, occupied the attention of Parliament until Easter. My son made his maiden speech on the 3rd of March, but as it was made in Committee of the whole House, I did not hear it; I heard, however, that he had got through his ordeal satisfactorily, his voice and manner being sympathetic. Sir Donald Maclean was kind enough to sing his praises to me and bring satisfaction to my paternal heart.

In March we lost the services at the Natural History Museum of our Director, Sir Lazarus Fletcher. As I had been for several years one of the principal trustees (by virtue of the Speakership) and had taken consider-

able part in the administration of the Museum and in the selection of Sir Lazarus to the Directorship, I wrote to him on his retirement, wishing him many years of happiness and health. His letter in reply was as follows:

"I wanted to glide from the Museum without anyone noticing it, but it was impossible to do so. In June I vanish to the Lowther district; not to a monastery, but to the quiet, small village of Ravenstonedale, Westmorland. I have long wanted to make headway with a bit of scientific work which requires concentration of thought continuously for some time. Unless I can finish it, the occasional work done at intervals during many years will be thrown away. For the last twelve years I have been under constant medical supervision, with a view to avoiding such a breakdown as took place in 1906–7. I have thus been able to reach the age limit, but have had to be an angel, which to human beings is sometimes against the grain."

Sir Lazarus did not, however, long survive, and I fear that his scientific work was never completed.

I dined on the 3rd of May at the Academy and found myself seated between Cardinal Bourne and Sir Douglas Haig. Cardinal Bourne had just returned from a trip through Palestine, Turkey, Bulgaria, Roumania, Yugo Slavia and Italy, the first civilian who had been through some of these countries since the Armistice; and I found, what I had not expected, that he held strong views of opposition toward the Zionist proposals for the resettlement of the Jews in Palestine. From Sir Douglas Haig I enquired whether the anxieties of the war had ever kept him awake during a whole night. His reply was that it had only been so on one occasion, at the moment of the extremest advance of the German army in the spring of 1918, and that he had spent it in drafting his proclamation to the army, calling upon them to stand with their backs to the wall

and, if necessary, die at their posts—a proclamation which became famous. He also told me that the time when he felt most apprehension was when in 1917 the French made an ineffective attack at the Chemin des Dames and were routed. The Germans, he said, knew they were beaten on the 28th of March when they launched a very big attack against Arras, were tremendously knocked about and could not renew the attack in the following days.

Much against the grain I was called upon to return thanks for the toast of The Guests, and managed to raise some laughter by investigating the basis of compensation on Socialistic principles due to a painter for his work. This was the dinner at which the Prince of Wales first captured popularity by the charm of his voice and address.

A few days later I was dining at the bench of the Inner Temple, when the late Mr. Gore Brown told me a thrilling story of how his son, an officer in the Guards, having been taken by the Germans and having been captured in his attempt to escape, was led out for execution and placed against a wall. A moment before the order to fire was given, a British aeroplane appeared and the German officer ordered the firing squad to take cover. Young Gore Brown, pulling the bandage from his eyes, discovered that he was alone, and seizing the priceless moment, made his escape—this time with complete success.

Here is another story of a totally different character which I also heard on this occasion. A man charged with assaulting his mother-in-law was convicted and fined £5 and threepence. He enquired what was the reason of the threepence? The magistrate replied, "That is for the entertainment tax."

In the spring of this year our old friend and kindest of hostesses, Lady Londonderry, fell a victim to pneumonia and died after a short illness. I have frequently spoken of our visits to her stately home at Wynyard, and will here only record our sense of deep personal loss at her premature death.

Lord Bryce had been our very successful Ambassador in Washington for some years, and on his retirement much delay occurred in filling up his place. Whether others were invited or not, I do not know, but I was asked to accept the appointment. After some consideration I declined, for I felt that I had not the necessary qualifications. It was obvious to me that many questions of financial adjustments would arise, that President Wilson's relation to the Senate would give rise to grave complications, that I did not possess the gifts of ready and frequent speech demanded of the British representative, and that I had little or no acquaintance with American politics or politicians. I also felt no inclination at my time of life to uproot myself from home and friends and start on a new career which promised little prospect of success. That I was justified in my anticipations was shown by the unfortunate experiences at Washington of such a capable diplomat as Lord Grey of Falloden, who eventually accepted the post.

On the 3rd of June two unusual incidents marked the ceremony of giving the Royal assent to Bills passed by the two Houses. When Black Rod arrived at the table of the House and in the usual form of words invited the attendance of Mr. Speaker and the House in the House of Lords to hear the Commission read, seized with a sudden and unusual respect for the messages coming from the Upper Chamber, the whole House rose

and listened in silence to the words that fell from their messenger. I duly repaired to the bar of the Lords and listened to the reading of the Commission and the list of Bills assented to. It is customary at the conclusion of this little ceremony for the Speaker and his immediate attendants to make three bows to the Lord Chancellor and the Commissioners, whilst retiring backwards, and for the occupants of the Woolsack to return the civility by raising their three-cornered hats; but on this occasion I was saved the trouble of doing so, as the Lord Chancellor and his colleagues rose and disappeared before I could begin my salutation. It was a poor return for the special civility which our House had shown a few moments earlier.

The precedence of the Speaker, who was often referred to as the "first Commoner of the realm," rested upon an old Act of Parliament of the first year of the reign of William and Mary, in which the Speaker of the House of Commons is named immediately after the peers of the realm in the enumeration of those entitled to be Lords Commissioners of the Great Seal. I had for some time felt that the officer selected by the representatives of the people to preside over them was entitled to a higher place in the hierarchy of the Kingdom, particularly in view of the great increase in the importance and dignity of the House of Commons as compared with its status in 1689. I accordingly approached the King upon the matter, and he was pleased to receive my suggestion favourably and to refer it to the College of Arms. On the 30th of May an Order in Council was passed, providing that upon all occasions and in all meetings, except where otherwise provided by Act of Parliament, the Speaker shall have precedence immediately after the Lord President of the

Council. The effect of this change was to establish the following as the order of precedence of the great Officers of State:

The Archbishop of Canterbury,
The Lord Chancellor,
The Archbishop of York,
The Prime Minister,
The Lord Chancellor of Ireland,
The Lord High Treasurer (if a Peer),
The Lord President of the Council,
The Speaker.

I had postponed my application to His Majesty until nearly the end of my period of office, so that my successor rather than myself should benefit by the change, following the precedent set by Mr. Balfour, who in his last weeks of office in 1905, had made a similar application on behalf of the Prime Minister's office.

At Whitsuntide I went down to Suffolk and, having enquired of the captain of our local cricket team how Campsea Ashe had fared in the matches which they had played, was amused to receive the following reply: "Not so very well in our last two matches, for you see we had not got our own umpire." There seems to be room for improvement in the system of the selection of umpires.

The Treaty of Versailles was signed on the 28th of May, and two days later Mr. Lloyd George received a great ovation on entering the House. Practically the whole House rose, and, after much cheering, somebody started "God save the King," which was heartily taken up in all quarters. From some of those who had been at the Paris Conference I heard several *bon mots* which were attributed to that caustic old statesman M. Clemenceau. If not *veri*, they are at all events *ben*

trovati. After signing the Treaty he is said to have remarked to a friend, "J'ai signé une guerre juste et sévère qui durera très longtemps." When remonstrated with for not having, as one of the Big Four, obtained better terms for France, he observed, "Que voulez-vous? J'étais entre Jésus Christ (Mr. Wilson) et Napoléon (Mr. Lloyd George)." He did not spare his own colleagues in the French Government, for of M. Klotz, the Finance Minister, he remarked, "Klotz est le seul juif qui ne connait pas la finance"; and of M. Pichon, "Ce n'est pas un aigle, mais les aigles n'ont pas sauvé le Capitol." Of General Pershing he said that if he had been a French General he would have been shot; if English, he would have been sent home; but being an American, he was given the Croix de Guerre. But the best story of him which I heard was his conversation with M. Paderewski, when the latter, as Prime Minister of Poland, called upon him on his arrival in Paris. M. Clemenceau received him cordially and enquired whether he really had the pleasure of addressing the world-famed pianist? M. Paderewski admitted his identity. M. Clemenceau could hardly believe it: did he really see the celebrated man whose art had entranced and excited countless thousands of people in every capital in the civilized world? M. Paderewski admitted the soft impeachment and bowed his acknowledgments. And had M. Paderewski now come to Paris, asked M. Clemenceau, as the Prime Minister of Poland? Again M. Paderewski answered Yes. "Quelle chute!" was the only comment. The French Prime Minister on one occasion summed up the British Prime Minister thus: "Ce petit homme n'a jamais rien appris et n'apprendra jamais rien."

I also heard an anecdote of the Italian Prime Minister,

who on being asked what had been taking place at the last meeting of the "Big Four," replied: "Wilson, Clemenceau and Lloyd George all talked English, and as I do not understand it, I said nothing, and now you know as much about it as I do."

On the day of the Peace Celebration (the 19th of July) I was present on the dais at the foot of the Queen Victoria Memorial statue, and had a splendid view of the march past. The figures which I best remember are those of Admiral Lord Beatty, with his cap cocked on one side, leading the Naval detachments, and of Lady Ampthill, tall and handsome, at the head of the women. In the evening all our family party mustered on the top of the clock tower, the only time that I was ever there. The night was misty and the fireworks in Hyde Park barely visible, but the general effect of looking down upon the silent but illuminated city very weird. I was also present at the Guildhall when an Address was presented to the King, at the Thanksgiving Service at St. Paul's, at a gala performance at the Opera, and at the river pageant, when the King and Queen went up the river in the Royal barge, preceded and followed by selected examples of various craft of the Merchant Service which had played so notable and gallant a part in the operations at sea. From the Speaker's House a fine and extensive view was obtainable of the pageant, and amongst our guests were the Dowager Empress of Russia and the Grand Duchess George; but the show was disappointing. The string of boats following each other at unnecessarily long intervals produced a very poor effect, and the Royal barge itself was a very poor affair to those who had ever seen the *Bucentoro*, the ancient barge of the Doges of Venice, in the arsenal at Venice.

One day at the end of July there arose suddenly a disturbance in the Strangers' Gallery caused by some blind ex-Service men, for whose comfort special arrangements had been made. I was unable to discover the cause of the trouble, but I let it be known that such a breach of the rules might endanger the admission of their companions in misfortune. I received what purported to be an apology from the leader, Edwards by name, but as his communication was addressed to me in Braille type, which I was unable to read, I was none the wiser in the end.

Just before the House rose for the autumn recess on the 19th of August, I dined at Grillion's. On an earlier page, I have referred to the origin and "raison d'être" of the club and the success which on the whole it has achieved in soothing the asperities of party feeling, but there had been times, and possibly they may recur, when party feeling ran so high that leaders of the divergent opinions declined to meet even at Grillion's festive board. The Home Rule controversy had led, for a time, to the absence of some of the most prominent members of the Club, but the war, and still more the peace, had again restored a harmony which it may be hoped will not again be broken. As an example of the mixture of parties which happily obtains at Grillion's, I may record that on this occasion the dinner was attended by Lord Crewe, Mr. Herbert Fisher, Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Lord Crawford, Lord Balfour of Burleigh, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Bishop Talbot, General Lyttelton, Lord Selborne, Lord Sanderson, Lord Stamfordham, Sir Edmund Gosse and myself. Sir Edmund Gosse, who is an indefatigable story-teller (in the best sense of the expression), told a story of the Dowager Lady Stanley of Alderley, who was the mother

of four sons and eight daughters, and upon some friend asking her whether all of them did not hold different religious views and only one a Christian, she replied, "Yes, that is correct"; but upon it being suggested that of course the Christian was His Eminence Algernon Stanley, the Bishop of Emmaus, she replied, "Oh, no! He is an unbeliever."

Shortly before the House rose for the summer, my wife and I were honoured by the acceptance by the Prince of Wales of an invitation to dine at the Speaker's House. We were fortunate in being able to secure the presence of several members of all political parties and their wives at dinner to meet H.R.H., and after dinner we threw open the house for an evening party, at which all the M.P.'s who attended and their wives were introduced to the Prince, to the mutual satisfaction, I believe, of both parties.

It was very soon after this, I think, that the Prince of Wales attended for the first time a meeting of the Standing Committee of the Trustees of the British Museum. King Edward and King George had both of them (when Prince of Wales) attended quite frequently. It had been their practice always to arrive after the business had begun, so that they should not have to displace from the chair a principal trustee, who by custom presided. It was thought, I presume, that if the Prince of Wales were present he would necessarily take the chair, but there seems to be no ground for this supposition, and I see no reason why the well-established practice of the Archbishop of Canterbury or the Speaker presiding should be set aside because of the arrival of H.R.H. at an earlier hour than usual.

At the beginning of September died my old friend, a cousin of my wife's, Lord Beresford, better known

as Lord Charley Beresford. He had combined distinguished Naval service with an intermittent political career. He first entered the House in 1874, and sat at intervals for various seats until 1916. His speeches were of what is called the "breezy" order, generally amusing and often startling, but he did not carry as much weight as his long experience and knowledge of practical details should have commanded. They were often marred by exaggeration (a common Irish failing), and an unnecessarily bitter expression of feelings against those Naval authorities with whom he did not agree. He was a most amusing companion and humorous *raconteur*. One of his stories recurs to me. Scene: a police court in Dublin. The Magistrate: "What is the prisoner's name?" Prisoner (who stuttered badly): "Bub-Bub-Bub-Bub—," etc. The Magistrate, to the police constable: "What is this man charged with?" Police Constable: "Please, Your Honour, soda-water." Lord Beresford was fond of recalling how on one occasion, after he had made a vigorous attack upon a Conservative Government, which he had been returned to support, he was waited upon by a deputation of Labour representatives, who invited him to assume the leadership of the Labour Party, at that time of exiguous dimensions.

Another Irishman, a peer, who had for many years been a Member of the House of Commons, died about the same time, Lord Rathmore, better known, perhaps, as David Plunkett. He was one of the most attractive speakers I ever heard during my time in the House. He had an agreeable presence and a most attractive voice; he was fluent and ready in debate, and a slight stammer gave additional point to his epigrams and sallies. He was excessively nervous before speaking.

The thought of the coming ordeal made him almost ill and may have accounted for the infrequency of his speeches, which was often attributed to laziness. He went to the Lords in 1895, but seldom, if ever, took any part in their lordships' debates.

When the first airship made a voyage over to Washington and back in July, I sent by it a letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives there, and received from him the following reply:

THE SPEAKER'S ROOMS,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
WASHINGTON.
July 8, 1919.

DEAR SIR,—

I received to-day the friendly letter which you sent by Airship R.34, and caused it to be read in the House of Representatives, where it was greeted with warm applause. I heartily reciprocate the goodwill expressed in your message and appreciate gratefully the kindly feeling which prompted it, and am sure that in thanking you and wishing for a constant strengthening of the ties of friendship which now unite our two nations, I represent faithfully the House of Representatives.

Yours respectfully,
JOHN H. GILLETT.

There was a general strike of railway servants at the end of September and an almost complete cessation of traffic. So far as we at Campsea Ashe were concerned, the arrangements made were so effective that we were better served with letters and newspapers, and with the necessaries of life (including fresh fish) than at any other time before or since.

The autumn Session began on the 22nd of October and lasted until Christmas Eve. The Aliens Bill, a Housing Bill and the Church Enabling Bill occupied, in their various stages, most of the time of the House, but in addition to presiding daily over the sittings of the House, my mornings were now occupied with a new conference, of which I had been asked to take the chair. On the 4th of June Mr. Edward Wood had persuaded the House to pass, by a large majority, a resolution in favour of the devolution of legislative and administrative business to some subordinate bodies in the United Kingdom. The object of this policy was to remove from Parliament the burden of business which could be properly called local and not affecting the Kingdom as a whole, and leave to the Parliament at Westminster more time for discussing Foreign and Colonial affairs and matters of general interest. The Conference was composed on the same lines as the Electoral Reform Conference had been, and of an equal number of peers and commoners representative of all sections in proportion to their numbers in the respective Houses. We met on the 23rd of October and sat three mornings a week until Christmas. Very soon after starting work we lost Lord Brassey, who succumbed to the results of an accident in London when he was run over by a motor. He had made a special study of the question of devolution, and if he had been spared to us, he would no doubt have been a protagonist in the cause.

Amongst the peers who took a prominent part in our deliberations and argumentations were Lord Charnwood, Lord Denman, Lord Harcourt, Lord Emmott, Lord Gladstone, Lord Stuart of Wortley and Lord Selborne; whilst amongst the commoners the most active were Sir Ryland Adkins, Sir Henry Cowan, Captain C. Craig,

Mr. Moles, Mr. J. M. Hogge, Mr. Murray Macdonald, Mr. Ronald MacNeill and Mr. Gideon Murray. We plunged at once *in medias res* and for four days discussed the question, proposed by Lord Brassey, that the areas of the subordinate parliaments should be the commonly accepted divisions of the United Kingdom: viz. England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales; but it soon became obvious that opinion was very much divided, especially on the possibility of treating England as one unit. Its preponderating position in point of population, wealth and importance, made it, so it was argued, impossible to treat it as though it were only one of a number of more or less equal federated States. What would be the position of the Prime Minister of England *vis-à-vis* the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom? These and many similar "avenues were explored" (to use a bit of modern political jargon) and as it did not seem likely that we should come to any decision upon this point without a serious split in the Conference, I suggested taking up the question of the allocation of administrative powers to the central or the subordinate legislatures. This matter showed a far greater feeling of unanimity, and in five sittings we had completed satisfactory lists of topics which might fairly be administered by subordinate bodies. A number of interesting problems relating to the judicial authority which was to determine whether a subordinate parliament was acting within its powers or no, how and when the Royal veto was to be exercised, whether there should be a power of dissolution of the subordinate parliaments or no, whether these should be bi-cameral or uni-cameral, the relationship of the House of Lords (whether reformed or unreformed) to the proposed new bodies, and a host of other relevant and important topics, came up for

discussion and decision during the 16 sittings which we held before Christmas. I reported progress to Lord Curzon and Mr. Bonar Law just before the Christmas recess, and occupied the holiday in thinking out some definite scheme to submit to the Conference at our next meeting. The more I considered the proposal of one supreme and four independent legislatures, the less I liked it. The confusions which might arise, the multiplicity of elections, the novelty of five (possibly even more) Prime Ministers and Cabinets of probably divergent political views, the enormous expense of building four new sets of Parliament buildings and Government offices and providing all the paraphernalia of administration, frightened my economical soul and led me to suggest a scheme of what might be termed "standing committees," composed of the representatives of the existing constituencies in England, Scotland and Wales respectively (we had at this point left Ireland out of our ken, because the Government was dealing with the Irish Representative Chamber or Chambers). In order to satisfy local feeling I proposed that the Scottish committee should sit at Edinburgh, the Welsh at Cardiff and the English at Westminster, and that the sessions of these committees should take place during the autumn, the sessions of the United Kingdom Parliament taking place during the earlier part of the year. My object in making these proposals was to effect as few changes as possible, at as low a cost as possible, and yet to meet legitimate national sentiment by the establishment at local centres of legislative and administrative bodies amenable to local pressure and local necessities. The weakness of my scheme lay in the absence of relief to overworked M.P.'s, the desire for which was one of the chief incentives for dealing with

the matter at all. The Conference agreed, I think, that by separating local from general administration and legislation, and also by considering the local affairs of the separate parts of the Kingdom simultaneously, instead of successively, there would be some alleviation of the burden of attendance, but as long as the body of members remained the same for English and for Imperial affairs, the relief offered could be little more than negligible.

When the Conference met again in the New Year, my plan was fully discussed, and so was that submitted by Mr. Murray Macdonald as an alternative. He favoured a system of entirely independent parliaments with all their belongings, consequences and expenditure. When it came to a vote, the Conference decided by a majority of one, myself not voting, to proceed with my scheme. After this it was obvious that the labours of our Conference would be sterile and that no Government would be likely to take up a subject which raised so many Constitutional and highly debatable topics upon a recommendation passed by a bare majority only.

Notwithstanding these discouraging conditions, the Conference continued steadily at work throughout all March and April, and did not conclude its labours until at its thirtieth sitting, on the 27th of April, I was authorized to sign the report, which took the form of a letter to the Prime Minister, setting out all the points on which there had been substantial agreement, and adding appendices showing the alternative schemes which had been so long discussed and the allocation of powers which had been practically agreed. The questions of finance and the judiciary had been remitted to committees under the chairmanship of Lord Chalmers and Lord Stuart of Wortley. These subjects raised

many points of extreme difficulty, but eventually our Conference found solutions, according to the best of our lights, and they were embodied in the appendices as well. The discussions had been of great interest, as they often raised recondite and sometimes difficult questions of Constitutional lore and law, but all along I felt that they were academic rather than practical, and that the driving force of necessity, which had been so active a factor in the Electoral Reform Conference, was absent.

In order to bring the account of this matter to an end, I have somewhat violated strict chronology, and now revert to the last weeks of 1919. They witnessed the advent of Lady Astor to the House, as depicted in the picture which has raised so much discussion recently. This occurred on the 1st of December. Lady Astor had consulted me as to whether she should wear a hat. I had advised against it. Fashion in ladies' hats varies frequently: a constant change of headgear would become the subject of remark equally with the absence of any change. Lady Astor, however, did not take my advice, and the well-known "toque" (I believe that is its correct designation) appears in the picture and records for all time the fashion of that day. On the same day I gave permission for a lady reporter to take her seat in the Reporters' Gallery—the first of her profession to be admitted. I believe that in 1890 Mr. Bradlaugh had tried to get a woman reporter into the gallery, but Mr. Speaker Peel had declined, stating that he could not give leave without the authority of the House, as it might lead to all manner of unforeseen consequences.

During an entr'acte of "Parsifal", I happened to be in Lady Cunard's box at the opera with Mr. Balfour, when Mr. Lytton Strachey, who was then writing the

Life of Queen Victoria, came in and questioned Mr. Balfour as to his personal recollections of the great Queen. I remember that Mr. Balfour, apparently rather to Mr. Lytton Strachey's surprise, was enthusiastic about the immense assiduity and ceaseless pains which the Queen had always shown in her determination to master all the details of business which it had been Mr. Balfour's duty to submit to her. In Mr. Balfour's view the Queen, who had been the centre of affairs for so many years, had a knowledge of European politics and of our foreign relations second to none of any of her Ministers.

CHAPTER XXX

1920

Visit to Paris—Meet Sir Henry Wilson and General Foch—Rheims in Ruins—Lord Halsbury—A new Black Rod—The House of Commons Mace—King of Spain on Bullfighting—Mr. Devlin Assaulted—Some Golf Stories.

With the beginning of the year the French Parliament reassembled in Paris, and the delegates from Alsace and Lorraine were about to take their places for the first time since 1870 in the Chamber of Deputies. Lord Derby, our Ambassador, gave a big dinner-party to celebrate the event and invited me to the Embassy to meet the returning deputies. The only other guest staying at the Embassy was Sir Henry Wilson. He was, as ever, brimming over with high spirits and amusing anecdotes about the Paris Conference and its successors, in most of which he had taken part. His description of how the British representatives on their knees searched with the aid of candles on a map laid out on the floor for Georgia, which had claimed to be established as a separate State, was highly entertaining. He told us that the Prime Minister, having temporarily fallen out with M. Klotz, a member of the French Cabinet, turned upon him and said: "You ought not to be called Klotz, but Klotzky!" and he also recalled how at a recent banquet at Buckingham Palace, given in honour of the President of Brazil, Mr. Balfour had mistaken Sir Arthur Walsh (who was then introducer of Ambassadors) for the Portuguese Minister and, after

some conversation on ordinary topics, had complimented him on his mastery of the difficulties of the English tongue.

The Embassy banquet took place on the 21st of January. Lord Derby had on his right M. Deschanel, who had just been elected President of the Republic, and on his left M. Millerand, who had just assumed office as Prime Minister. I sat opposite Lord Derby, having on my right Field Marshal Foch and on my left M. Marsal, the new Minister of Finance. I ventured to put to the Field Marshal the question of why he had agreed to the Armistice on the 11th of November 1918, and why he had not insisted on pushing the enemy farther back, at all events into his own country, if not as far as Berlin. His reply was that he did not feel justified, after the Armistice had been asked for, in losing any more soldiers' lives in the attempt to push forward, and that as a matter of fact the Allied advance had then reached the furthest limit of which it was capable without a reorganization of the whole combination of forces which would have entailed much delay. Another question which I put was similar to that which I had in the previous year put to Sir Douglas Haig, viz. whether he had ever been kept awake all night by anxiety due to the responsibility resting upon him. To this he answered " No," although of course there had been nights when, owing to the call of his duties, he had remained at his post awake all night. The banquet was followed, of course, by speeches in French, to which I contributed my share, in which the eternal brotherhood between France and England, in peace as well as in war, was toasted and vowed.

Both M. Deschanel and M. Millerand appeared to wear a harassed look. The former, as we now know,

was in bad health and did not long remain President; the latter, as Prime Minister, was doubtless thinking of the morrow, when he had to face Parliament. No Prime Minister looks his best on such occasions.

On the following day, through the kind offices of the Marquis de Polignac, I visited Rheims and saw the scene of almost complete destruction which had been wrought there. At one period of the siege 2,000 shells a day had been dropped on the city; only fourteen houses had escaped ruin, and the Cathedral had been badly battered about, but I am convinced that if the Germans had intended to destroy it utterly, they could easily have done so, for it stands out prominently and was of course well within the range of the German guns. I did not escape without a visit to the celebrated cellars of Pommery and Greno, of which the Marquis de Polignac is the head. These cellars are huge underground passages extending miles, excavated in the chalk about fifty feet below the surface of the soil, and were used for the accommodation of troops who could, without exposing themselves, be moved from one district to another as required. The champagne is stored in vast quantities along the sides of these passages, and as the soldiers used occasionally to pull out bottles for consumption from the bottom, the pile of bottles would sag, some would crack in the process and much was lost. In the environs of the town parties were occupied in exploding hitherto unexploded shells, in gathering together and burying vast quantities of barbed wire, and in endeavouring to restore the face of pre-war nature.

I only spent three nights in Paris, and on my return to town, happened to be at the morning service at the Temple Church on the 25th of January, when Lord

Halsbury was amongst the Benchers then present. He was on that day celebrating the seventieth anniversary of the date of his call to the Bar. Except for deafness, he was vigorous and alert and received from all the Benchers present that day their warmest congratulations and good wishes. My earliest recollection of Lord Halsbury dates from the Lawson *v.* Labouchere case, about the year 1880, in which he was counsel for the plaintiff. I had witnessed the greater part of his Parliamentary career, whether in the House of Commons or on the Woolsack, and when I was first appointed Speaker, I found Lord Halsbury as my opposite number in the Lords. He was a fine specimen of a real old Tory of an antiquated type, full of fight and no compromise, bold as a lion, a "diehard" of the sternest stuff. His work in the Commons had not shown that promise of first-rate performance which his prolonged tenure of the Lord Chancellorship realized. He was often accused, somewhat unfairly, of nepotism, but most of his appointments were excellent and justified his judgment, some of those most criticized turning out the best. He was for twenty years Lord Salisbury's *fidus Achates*, from 1886 to 1906, and exercised a greater influence on him than any of his other colleagues. He lived to be ninety-eight. Lord Mersey, in a letter to me dated the 5th of September 1921, wrote: "I see that two days ago old Halsbury, who gave me my judgeship, touched ninety-eight! What a career he has had!"

When Parliament was opened on the 10th of February, a new Black Rod came, on behalf of His Majesty, to summon us to the Upper House. General Sir William Pulteney had succeeded Admiral Sir H. Stephenson in that office. The latter was a gallant old tar of the

"stand-no-d——d-nonsense" type. He did not suffer Irish Nationalist M.P.'s gladly, when they applied to him for seats for their ladies in the House of Lords, and used to give them "quarterdeck" replies. I have no doubt that the Irish M.P.'s gave as good as they got, but they used to complain to me, and it became my duty to pass the complaints on to the King, who, I understand, at least upon one occasion caused an expression of his displeasure to be conveyed to the offending official. Notwithstanding this unfortunate incident, the Admiral and I were always on the best of terms, but I was often nervous, when he came to summon the Commons, as to whether he would get through the formula prescribed for the occasion. I remember an occasion during the period of my predecessor when Black Rod could get no further than the words "Mr. Speaker——" and in theatrical phraseology "dried up." Speaker Gully at last, after Black Rod had demonstrated his inability of getting any further, addressed him thus: "I understand you to say that the Lord Commissioners who are authorized by virtue of a Royal Warrant to declare the Royal assent to Acts that have been agreed upon by both Houses, desire the immediate presence of this House in the House of Lords, to hear the Commission read." The Speaker thus put the formula into Black Rod's mouth, Black Rod bowed, and the awkward *impasse* was relieved. This eclipsed Lord Burleigh's shake of the head.

The work of this Session comprised the New Home Rule Bill, which at last provided some sort of a solution for the problem of Irish Government and was accepted as such *faute de mieux*; a War Emergency Continuation Bill, one or more Unemployment Bills, a Coal Bill, a Tithe Rent Charge Bill, an Anti-profiteering

Bill, some Pensions Bills, a Restriction of Rent Bill, an Emergency Powers Bill, a Public Health Bill, and an Agriculture Bill. The mere enumeration of these measures will serve to show that the House was kept very heavily employed, but in addition to the legislative programme, a constant fire of criticism was maintained dealing with all the contemporaneous events of the year, and particularly with events in Ireland (which were gradually going from bad to worse), with the succession of strikes, which followed each other with bewildering rapidity, and with the steady advance of prices and its accompanying unemployment. There were constant demands for economy in general, none for practical parsimony. In their efforts for effecting economy in public expenditure H.M. Government were more than once defeated by an adverse vote of the House, until in despair they seemed to give up the attempt. One Member, who was always calling for more and never missed an opportunity of raiding the Treasury, I used in private conversation with him to call "The Pirate King." Economy was on the lips of all, but expenditure was in their hearts.

Of incidents concerning myself personally there were but a few. On the last day of the sitting of the Devolution Conference, the final revise, headed "Private and Confidential," had been circulated to the Members, who had been specially requested not to make it public until it had been formally presented, but nevertheless the whole document appeared in *The Times* next day. I sent for *The Times* Press Gallery representative, but was, of course, unable to obtain from him any indication as to how the document had been obtained. The most that I could do was to warn him that in the event

of a repetition of such an offence as publishing a document headed "Private and Confidential," I should strike him off the list of those admitted under the Speaker's authority to the Press Gallery. His excuse to me was that the protecting words did not appear upon the document which had come into his hands, and I was unable to follow the matter up any further.

On the 18th of February some gentlemen, introduced by Lord Harcourt, came to my library in order to make a special examination of the Speaker's mace. They included the Mayor and Town Clerk of Abingdon, the Curator of the London Museum and Mr. Spink (the well-known jeweller), who were all experts on maces. After examining and comparing a number of maces with that in daily use in the House of Commons, and after reading such records as still exist relating to it, we came to the conclusion that the shaft of the present mace is the shaft of the mace which lay on the table of the House in 1652 when Oliver Cromwell ordered its removal, and that the knot at its foot and the crown and royal arms at its head had been added during the reign of Charles II. The mace itself has suffered from over-gilding and its detail has been somewhat blurred. It had always been the custom to re-gild the mace at the beginning of each new Parliament, and, as on one occasion during my Speakership we had had two new Parliaments in one year and this practice seemed to be unnecessary and even harmful, I gave instructions that it should be discontinued.

Sir Henry Lucy had referred to me in one of his amusing Parliamentary Letters to the Sunday Press, and in sending me a copy of his remarks, wrote me the following letter:

HYTHE, KENT.
8th *April* 1920.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER,—

You will observe from enclosed cutting that I have been taking your name in vain, not I fear for the first time in the fifteen years you have filled the Chair. . . .

My wife and I are just back from two months' visit to Portugal. Amongst other privileges, we enjoyed a railway strike, a suspension of postal, telegraphic and telephonic service, an occasional bomb falling in the streets, three changes of Ministries in a fortnight, and the cloud of a fresh revolution lowering day and night.

Yours faithfully,
HENRY LUCY.

In an earlier part of this book I have referred to my acquaintance with Sir Henry, and will therefore only add here that our relations continued to be of the most friendly character until his death, although opportunities of meeting diminished as time went on.

At Easter my wife and I went to Cumberland, and there I picked up some of the late Sir Wilfrid Lawson's amusing stories. A farmer's wife, going into a barn, saw her husband hanging from a beam, upon which she ejaculated: "Well! I wonder whatever you will do next!" The story goes on that a friend said to her: "Did not you at once cut him down?" and that she replied, "No, for he was still alive."

I was also amused at the definition of an optimist as a man who goes to the United States with a cork-screw in his pocket, but recent developments have rendered that definition obsolete. A definition of a pessimist would seem to be relevant at this point. I think I heard it from Sir Robert Horne—viz. a man who, being offered the choice of two evils, chooses both.

For a week-end in the summer we went to Ramsey Abbey, where our host, Lord de Ramsey, told me many stories of the brutal treatment to which he had been

subjected during his internment in Germany. Lord de Ramsey was blind and was largely dependent upon the kind offices of two ladies, also interned with him. After a time he was deprived of their assistance and left to his own devices. For exercise he was permitted to walk up and down a narrow pathway, but from sheer devilry his tormentors used, as he approached, to cause loud explosions close to him with the sole object of causing terror.

My old friend Canon Rawnsley died on the 28th of May. A few days before the end he had penned some lines of congratulation to me on completing the fifteenth year of my Speakership, which his widow subsequently forwarded to me. "The ruling passion still in death." Whatever view may be taken of the merits of his Muse, his work on behalf of the National Trust, his enthusiasm for the Lake country in general and for Wordsworth in particular, his eloquent sermons and neatly turned speeches, will always live in the memory of those who knew him.

One week-end at Polesden Lacey Mrs. Ronald Greville invited us to join a party to meet the King and Queen of Spain. The conversation turned one day on bull-fighting, and the King explained that the municipalities throughout the country had spent so much capital in building huge bull-rings, which could be put to no other purpose than bull-fighting, that it seemed unlikely that they would ever consent to the abolition of that national pastime, but that possibly by the improvement of the quality of the herds supplying the bulls, their proprietors might find a more lucrative sale for their stock, and if the supply of bulls failed, the so-called sport would come to an end. I ventured the opinion that bull-fighting was as deeply ingrained

in the Spanish character as betting in the English, and that "*expellas furcâ, tamen usque recurret.*" Sir Robert Horne, who was also of the party, told an amusing story of an Aberdeen man who was heard to say, "I've been wondering where those Jews got all that money from, which I've got off them." Another story: The Queen of Hawaii, when on a visit to this country, was explaining to Queen Victoria that she had English blood in her veins. On being further questioned, she explained that her grandfather had been one of those who had eaten Captain Cook.

When the House rose in August a rupture between Russia and Poland seemed imminent, and as there was considerable feeling that in such an event the House should at once reassemble, a new form of adjournment motion was devised, which has more than once been subsequently adopted, whereby the adjournment was to take place until a fixed date "unless the Speaker, after consultation with H.M. Government, considers that the public interest requires an earlier meeting." In this case nothing occurred to cause an earlier meeting, and we rose from the 16th of August to the 19th of October. I spent the autumn again at work like a labourer on the farm or in the garden, hoeing roots, chopping up fallen timber, pruning trees, weeding and making myself as useful as an amateur gardener can —a second Cincinnatus.

When the House met again in the autumn, there was much discussion over the horrible murders and atrocities which were occurring in Ireland, resembling the barbarities of the French Revolution and the Bolshevik *régime*, and of the reprisals which they evoked. Sir Hamar Greenwood, the Irish Secretary, was not always happy in the way he dealt with the situation

in debate, and feelings sometimes ran high. On one occasion Mr. Devlin was making a violent speech and leant over the bench in front of him, occupied by supporters of the Government. In a hasty moment one of the latter, generally a very quiet and unassuming Member, goaded to desperation by Mr. Devlin's oratory, seized hold of him and pulled him off his legs on to the bench in front. Not unnaturally this led to considerable commotion and uproar, and I was forced temporarily to suspend the sitting. On its resumption the offender made a full and suitable apology and the debate proceeded. A few days later intimation was received at Scotland Yard of a plot to create a disturbance in the gallery and of possibly serious doings. I was called into consultation in Downing Street, and it was arranged that for a time all the public galleries should be closed and that access for the public to the House should be restricted to two entrances. This was done and, though my action was criticized by some Members, I pointed out that it was for their protection that the action was taken and the House was, I believe, satisfied that it was necessary. We wound up the Session with some all-night sittings, occasioned by the strong opposition displayed towards Dr. Addison's Public Health Amendment Bill (eventually rejected by the Lords), and by discussions on the Agriculture Bill to which the Lords had made several amendments not accepted by the Commons. On the latter occasion the House sat from the usual hour of 2.45 p.m. until 1 p.m. on the following day, and then met again an hour and three-quarters later at 2.45 p.m., to consider Lords' amendments. Delays caused by the passage to and fro of the Bill until all matters in dispute were adjusted, kept the House sitting until past midnight, and it was

not until 12.30 a.m. that we were summoned to the other Chamber to hear the Royal assent given and the prorogation Commission read. Thus I had been for thirty-one hours almost continuously in the Chair.

I was present at the unveiling of the Cenotaph by His Majesty on the 11th of November, and marched in procession with the Prime Minister and Mr. Asquith to Westminster Abbey for the burial of the "Unknown Warrior." The expression "The Unknown Warrior" was not that originally employed. The order of service in Westminster Abbey was entitled "The Funeral Service of a British Warrior," but the former designation has now come to be universal. The day was fortunately a fine one for November, and the ceremony, which went off without a hitch, singularly impressive. Mr. Salisbury's picture, which is now on the wall of St. Stephen's Hall, is a faithful representation of the scene in the Abbey.

Soon after this ceremony a story went the rounds that a certain lady, who is credited with a love of collecting celebrities in her house, had issued invitations for a luncheon party "to meet the widow of the Unknown Warrior."

My son Arthur, who is an ardent golfer, amused me with the following stories: (1) He was playing with the Danish Minister, M. Grevenkop de Castenskiold, against another pair, and had left him in a bad position for his stroke. Quoth the Danish Minister, "There is only one syllable I can use and say—'Partner.'" He had no doubt intended to say "Damn." (2) A golf club secretary had written to one of the members condoling with him on the loss of his wife and offering sympathy, but the effect of the letter was spoilt by the addition of the following: "P.S. We too

have had our troubles. Yesterday two strangers came to the Golf Club house and insisted on ordering tea." (3) Whilst my son was playing with M. de Castenskiold the conversation happened to turn on diplomatic privileges, and at the end of the round one of the caddies was heard to observe, " I don't know nothing about diplomatic privileges, but I saw that foreign gentleman tee up his ball in the bunker." (4) On another occasion the Danish Minister had the misfortune to lose his ball. Prolonged search failed to reveal its whereabouts and M. de Castenskiold bemoaned the loss of a brand new " Silver King." The caddy corrected him and said it was a " Dunlop." Then said M. de Castenskiold, " I have my time wasted, for I was looking for a ' Silver King.' "

CHAPTER XXXI

1921

Retire from Speakership—Vote of Thanks—Farewell—Did I ever wish to return?—Patience all-important—Improvements in Procedure—The Worst Scenes Witnessed—Necessity for Free Speech.

I had now completed over fifteen years' tenure of the Speaker's Chair, and I felt that the time was approaching for my retirement. Sir Courtenay Ilbert had also informed me of his desire to resign his post, and in writing to the Prime Minister about him and his probable successor, I added: "Now as to myself —I should be very glad to be relieved from the Speakership about the end of March, when the break will occur for the Easter recess. I shall have been by that time nearly sixteen years in the Chair, after a preliminary experience of ten years at the Table, and am anxious, at the age of sixty-six, which I shall then have reached, to enjoy a little more leisure than the strenuous sessions since 1905 have permitted. I am, however, chiefly anxious that my successor, whoever he may be, may have an opportunity of getting accustomed to his work during the lifetime of the present Parliament, and may find himself securely in the saddle before he has to face the next House of Commons, which may be a much more difficult one to control than the present. I do not think it would be fair to any Speaker to make his tenure of office commence with the life of a new Parliament. In any event his work will probably be difficult, and if he has to learn his business for the first time when he

is facing a new House of Commons, the situation might become very uncomfortable both for him and the House; whereas if he has two or three years' experience and authority behind him, he would be in a much better position to cope with difficulties as they may arise."

The Prime Minister agreed, and it was accordingly arranged that after the financial business had been concluded, which always involves considerable demands upon the time of the House during March, I should make the formal announcement of my retirement.

Since the time of Guy Fawkes it has been the custom for the Corps of Beefeaters, the custodians of the Tower of London, to visit the Palace of Westminster on the day preceding the opening of Parliament and to make a thorough visit of all the subterranean chambers and passages beneath the two Houses of Parliament. This year I accompanied them, and descending through a narrow and concealed entrance, close behind the Speaker's chair, visited every nook and cranny of the vast rabbit warren which underlies that portion of the building where business is transacted. It consists of heating chambers, ventilating chambers, endless passages, storerooms, staircases, offices, boilers, electric generators and so forth. We visited them all in single file. I got hopelessly lost as to my whereabouts but eventually came up somewhere in the House of Lords —prophetic of the fate in store for me. I believe that it was the custom to regale the Corps of Beefeaters with a hearty meal at a neighbouring restaurant at the conclusion of their labours; whether this custom still obtains or not I cannot say, but I only know that I was not invited to share it on this occasion.

Parliament was opened on the 15th of February

under rather gloomy and threatening conditions. A rapid fall in prices had led to a fall in wages and growing unemployment. The condition of Ireland was shocking. Murders, " not single spies but in battalions," were increasing in number from week to week. Roads were being undermined and exploded, bridges blown up, incendiarism by Sinn Feiners had spread to parts of England, reprisals were constantly taking place. The whole situation in the South and West of Ireland was deplorable. The Home Rule Act, which had just been passed, was not yet in operation and was repudiated by the Republican Party. No further legislation for Ireland was in contemplation, but the administration of Ireland was a matter of constant criticism and attack. The Government was prepared to discuss matters with the leaders or elected representatives of the Sinn Fein movement, but none were forthcoming. In the meanwhile they were not prepared to submit to crime and violence and were determined to " carry on."

An Unemployment Insurance Bill occupied some time, and a Bill for de-controlling the coal industry also received the assent of the House, although it was strongly opposed by the miners' representatives, who feared a great drop in wages as its result. On the day on which it passed its third reading the sudden resignation of Mr. Bonar Law on grounds of ill health was announced. The Prime Minister in making the announcement spoke with great emotion, due to the alarming medical report which he had received of his colleague's health, and which necessitated his immediate departure from London to a warmer climate, where he regained sufficient strength to enable him to return some months later and resume Parliamentary work.

In the meanwhile Mr. Austen Chamberlain was elected the leader of the Conservative section of the Coalition and took office as Lord Privy Seal, handing over the Exchequer to Sir Robert Horne.

Although it had been my bad luck to have some public differences with Mr. Bonar Law, to which I have already referred, I always had a great respect for his ability and admiration for his intellect. From the time that he first took a subordinate office in the 1900 Parliament I had marked him as a man likely to go far. He must have had a wonderful memory, for he could reel out figures and quotations without hesitation, and it was but seldom that he had recourse to a diminutive pocket-book in which the exact quotation for which he was searching found itself. His weak voice was his heaviest handicap. As leader of the House, in Mr. Lloyd George's absence, during the last years of the war and the first years of the peace he was particularly successful. The bitterness and asperity which he had shown as leader of the Opposition immediately before the war, were no longer there. He was perfectly frank, or at all events gave the appearance of being so, conciliatory, courteous and yet effective in debate. The only occasion when I met him after his return to active political life was when, in the course of the formation of his Ministry, he tried to prevail upon me to undertake the control of an important department and join his Cabinet, an honour which, however, I felt no temptation to accept.

Sir Courtenay Ilbert resigned his post as Clerk of the House on the 14th of March, after twenty years' service at "the Table." I have elsewhere in this book paid a tribute to his great intelligence and abilities, and will only add that I found him at all times ready

to supplement any lack of knowledge, on his part or mine, with the most diligent research and painstaking investigation of precedents or Constitutional lore. On the following day, on the motion of the Prime Minister, a cordial vote of thanks to him was unanimously passed by the House.

He was succeeded in the position of Clerk of the House by Mr. T. L. Webster, the best choice possible. Mr. Dawkins became Clerk Assistant, and it rested with me to fill up the third place of Second Clerk Assistant, for which I was fortunate enough to obtain Mr. Gilbert F. M. Campion, who had shown great ability when acting as secretary to the Devolution Conference.

It was now my turn next, but in view of the grave situation which had arisen through the threat of a general coal strike supported by the Railway and Transport Unions, the Prime Minister requested me to postpone my resignation for a few days. The so-called Triple Alliance of Coal, Railway and Transport had proclaimed a general strike for the 15th of April, but at the last moment the two latter Unions had withdrawn and the danger of a general dislocation of business and social existence had for the time passed. On the 25th of April I accordingly announced to the House my desire to be relieved of my duties, and on the following day the Prime Minister moved a vote of thanks to me in the following terms:

> "That the thanks of this House be given to Mr. Speaker for his distinguished services in the Chair for more than fifteen years; that he be assured that this House fully appreciates the zeal, ability and impartiality with which he has discharged the duties of his high office through a period of unusual labour, difficulty and anxiety, and the

judgment and firmness with which he has maintained its privileges and dignity; and that this House feels the strongest sense of his unremitting attention to the constantly increasing business of Parliament, and the uniform urbanity and kindness which have earned for him the respect and esteem of this House."

In announcing my resignation I recalled the fact that I was one of the oldest Members, that I had had almost thirty-eight years of membership, that during my Speakership there had only been three years in which no autumn Session was held, that I had passed the time of life when Civil servants were superannuated, and that I had sixty-six personal reasons for retiring. I repeated to the House the reasons, which I had given to the Prime Minister, in favour of a new Speaker being elected during the continuance and not at the commencement of a Parliament, and whilst thanking Members for the generosity and indulgence which they had shown me, asked for a repetition of it in granting me leave to retire.

On the following day the Prime Minister, in moving the vote of thanks to me, which I have quoted verbatim, made a very flattering and laudatory speech. My cheeks still blush when I recall it. He pointed out that although five Ministries during my time had failed to retain the confidence of the House, I had succeeded in doing so; that confidence had ripened into gratitude, and that the guardianship of the privileges of Members which I had exercised, was interwoven with the liberties of the land. He referred to the fact that for 600 years my ancestors had sat in that Chamber or its predecessors, and that the honour of the House was in my blood. He selected two qualities in me as specially

worthy of mention, viz. the discriminating ear and a gift of humour which, whilst occasionally indulging in sallies at the expense of individuals, left no sting or poison to rankle. He referred in terms of generous appreciation to the part which I had taken in placing the Constitution on a sound basis by my work on the Electoral Reform Conference, and prophesied that in my case retirement would only mean a change of service —a prophecy which has come true.

Mr. Walsh, on behalf of the Labour Party, expressed gratitude for the assistance which I had always rendered to Members of his Party, and declared that the impartiality of the president was the greatest treasure the House could possess. Mr. Asquith, referring to the fact that his entrance and mine into the House were almost contemporaneous, observed that although much had changed, the House had preserved its continuous identity and characteristic atmosphere; and after a kind reference to some of the qualities which he had observed in me, spoke of my keen insight into human nature and my "unfailing dexterity in the employment of the lighter as well as the heavier weapons in the dialectical armoury."

I was overwhelmed with these too generous encomiums, but I had to propose the question to the House. After it had been carried "nemine contradicente" I had to reply, and in doing so said that no man could receive the unanimous thanks of the House without feeling emotion. I craved the indulgence of the House on the ground that I had not made a speech in it for twenty-five years. Taking up what the Prime Minister had said about my family, I recalled that although my grandfather had sat there for fifty years, he had never made even his maiden speech. I went on to say that

without the confidence of the House no man could fill the position of its Speaker, but that I was conscious that I had succeeded in obtaining it at an early period of my Speakership and was sincerely grateful for its continuance. I had sought, I said, to preserve the authority and dignity of the Chair; I had endeavoured to construe the rules which I administered with common sense and without pedantry; I had been slow to mark what was said amiss and I was convinced that although the House was not a perfect institution, it was "admirably fashioned for expressing the will of a high-spirited and free people and for promoting the welfare of all classes." I concluded with a few words of thanks to the clerks at the Table and to the Press in the Reporters' Gallery, whom I described as "in the House but not of it." My final words, which I take the liberty of quoting verbatim, were: "In bidding a final farewell to the House of Commons, I trust that it will not be thought inappropriate or presumptuous of me if I use the words, which I have often read from this spot when reading to the House the gracious Speech from the Throne, and say in the words of the concluding paragraph, 'I pray that the blessing of Almighty God may rest upon your deliberations.'"

The House did me the exceptional honour of remaining uncovered whilst I was addressing them.

The terms of the vote of thanks were extremely generous, and I was very much touched not only by the expressions contained therein, but by the kind appreciation of my services, voiced by Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Asquith and Mr. Walsh, and the cheers with which a very full House received them. I found it a trying ordeal to read them out from the Chair, and put the motion to the House, and for a moment or two I faltered,

but soon resumed control of myself and brought to a close the last question which I thought that I was ever to propose. And yet it turned out not to be the last. The practice had usually been for the departing Speaker to remain for a short time in the Chair and then quietly disappear, his place being taken by the Deputy Speaker, but on this occasion I was asked to return at the conclusion of the business in hand (which happened to be the Budget) and to run through the orders of the day and put the question "That this House do now adjourn." I accordingly did so, and after the last declaration that the Ayes had it, I stood on the steps of the Chair and shook hands with every Member of the House who had remained until the close of the proceedings.

Thus ended my connection with the House of Commons; which, beginning in 1883, had lasted, with a short break of six months, for thirty-seven years. It was a long time, but not so long as that of my grandfather, Colonel H. C. Lowther, for he had sat from 1812 till 1867, and his cousin, Colonel James Lowther, had sat from 1775 to 1818. They had therefore between them had a Parliamentary experience of ninety-two years, whilst my father and I had covered fifty-four years, not a bad record, I should imagine, in family history.

I had undertaken to go to Canada in order to present to the Canadian House of Commons a replica of the Speaker's Chair presented to it by members of the Empire Parliamentary Association, and, as the date fixed for my departure was to be early in May, the intervening days were fully occupied in saying good-bye to House of Commons friends and to the officers of the House, and in replying to a large correspondence of

congratulation on the past and good wishes for the future. I am glad to recall that Major Edward Cadogan's valuable services were recognized by the grant to him of the honour of a C.B. The Prime Minister wrote to inform me that the King had been pleased to confer a Viscountcy upon me. His Majesty was also good enough to convey to me his personal appreciation of and thanks for my services. I had an opportunity of thanking him *vivâ voce* when Their Majesties invited my wife and myself to a family luncheon at Buckingham Palace on the 3rd of May.

As I was just about to start for Canada, I postponed the necessary application to the College of Arms for my letters patent conferring the title until my return from overseas, and then I selected the name of Ullswater from its connection with Cumberland, which I had represented, and its proximity to the family home of the Lowthers. In order not to delay the issue of a new writ for Cumberland until the letters patent had passed the Great Seal, I made application for the Chiltern Hundreds, which being granted, enabled a new writ for Mid-Cumberland to be issued without delay. On the election taking place, my brother, General Sir Cecil Lowther, was elected in my place by a narrow majority.

With my departure on the 11th of May 1921, for a visit to the New World, I bring this record of my life and recollections to a close and will conclude with a few general reflections.

After leaving the Chair and the House, I was frequently asked whether I missed my occupation and did not wish myself back? I did not find the answer easy. Like many questions, it was open to an affirma-

tive as well as to a negative reply. Let me try to explain.

Parliamentary life in the House of Commons, in one capacity or another, had been my chief occupation for thirty-seven years, and it was obvious that to close the volume, never to reopen it, was likely to cause a break in the continuity of daily routine, a snapping of ties, a farewell to many friends and acquaintances, a loss of interest in political events, which the creation of subsequent activities or interests could never replace. The political and social position of the Speaker is a great one and is not lightly undertaken or put aside. He is the pivot on which the whole machinery of the House of Commons turns. Highly honoured and respected (outwardly, at all events), his word in his own sphere is law. The final decision of many matters affecting the conduct of business rests with him. He is brought into contact with all the chief personalities of the time. To him is allocated a fine house, well-appointed and cared for, at which the rate collector never calls. It is not easy to leave all this without casting a longing, lingering look behind.

But whilst the advantages of the position are such as I have described, the sense of responsibility is heavy, the feeling of restraint, of compulsion, of being tied, of want of freedom, is great, and the moment of release not otherwise than pleasant. The Speaker is necessarily somewhat in the position of a schoolmaster who takes no part in the lighter side of the school life. He is always on his best behaviour and must put on company manners; a superior person, who must not condescend to the pleasantries, the jokes and the nicknames, which are bandied about amongst his fellow Members. The Chair is aloof from these trivialities, which give a savour

to the daily Parliamentary routine. Its occupant sits apart and alone, and it is but seldom that any Member relieves the monotony of his task with a whispered anecdote from the lobby or the latest story from the smoking-room. More is the pity, for the long hours in the Chair would be more bearable if such friendly intercourse were less restricted.

I am sometimes asked whether I listened to all the speeches to which I appeared to be attentive? My answer, to use the well-known formula, "is in the affirmative," though I must admit that I did not listen to all with the same rapt attention. I have tried to work out a computation of the number of speeches which I heard during my sixteen years in the Chair, and at a rough figure I should compute them at about 50,000. In some highly controversial debates I found myself frequently, almost constantly, seeking in my mind for the answer to the arguments used on one side or the other. This was particularly so on the Fiscal question, on which I had an open mind and on which I was never called upon to enunciate my views to my constituents or elsewhere. It may be not inappropriate at this point to mention that during my Speakership over 1,000 Acts of Parliament were placed on the Statute Book, all of which, at some stage or other, came under my supervision and consideration.

I was amused at an article signed with the initials A.G.G. which I happened to read in the *Daily News*. It related how, when I was elected Speaker, I was reported to have observed, "The Speakership will give me three things I don't need. It will give me a house in town; I have that already. It will give me a salary of £5,000, and my income is already sufficient. It will give me a peerage, which I don't want." In passing,

I may say that I have no recollection of ever having made such a statement, and that I think it very unlikely that I should ever have done so, as it had been my ambition for some years to achieve the position which eventually fell to my lot. The article went on to describe me as follows (and I must leave it to those who know me to say how far the description was correct): "A plain man, without a touch of genius, almost without a touch of brilliancy, but with all the qualities of the average man in perfect equilibrium. He has culture, loves painting almost as much as stalking the deer, has retained his interest in the drama, tells a good story, enjoys a good book. But he is essentially the ordinary man in an extraordinary degree. . . . His instinct for justice sound, his spirit firm and masculine as the strong, well-tended hand. He is the type of the practical man, who does his task honestly, firmly and good-humouredly. The office of Speaker does not demand rare qualities. It demands common qualities in a rare degree."

One quality which the writer has not specifically mentioned, but to which I venture to lay some claim, is that of patience. This virtue seems to me essential for one who has to undergo the tedium of long debates, much repetition, and many irrelevancies. I frequently used to inculcate upon the clerks at the Table, who sometimes early in a session complained of these trials, that it was of no use repining, and that come weal, come woe, we would have to remain at our posts until the middle of August, with the additional prospect of an autumn session, and that we could do little or nothing towards a more rapid expedition of business.

A story is told of Speaker Denison, a gentleman of

an impatient disposition, who on one occasion, when a tiresome speaker rose to continue a debate, already unduly prolonged, joined the rest of the House in calling out "Oh! oh!" and was the most vociferous amongst them.

Whether I was right or wrong in my admonition to the gentlemen at the Table, I must, however, note that the arrangements of business improved vastly during my experience of Parliament. When I first entered the House a great deal of time was spent in discussing the allocation of business as between the Government and unofficial Members. That is now definitely fixed by Standing Order. There were also many ineffective debates upon various matters, any of which could be raised before going into Committee of Supply. That has now been adjusted. Debates in Supply were often very discursive and turned upon trivialities. The order of votes in Supply is now fixed by arrangement and the quality of the discussion greatly improved. Another matter where great improvement has also taken place is in regard to questions. When I first entered the House every Member who had a question on the notice paper read the whole of his question aloud before the Minister answered it. I remember some chaff of Mr. Gladstone, who would before replying to a question, say: "The Hon. Member for so-and-so asks whether it is the intention of H.M. Government to, etc., etc.," and repeat verbatim the whole question. It was Sir Charles Dilke who first set the example of calling out the number of his question. To ears accustomed to the more lengthy process, this procedure seemed somewhat bald, but the House soon adopted it and saved much time thereby. There was then no time limit for questions, as there is now; but on the other hand, the

number of questions was comparatively small and supplementary questions a rarity.

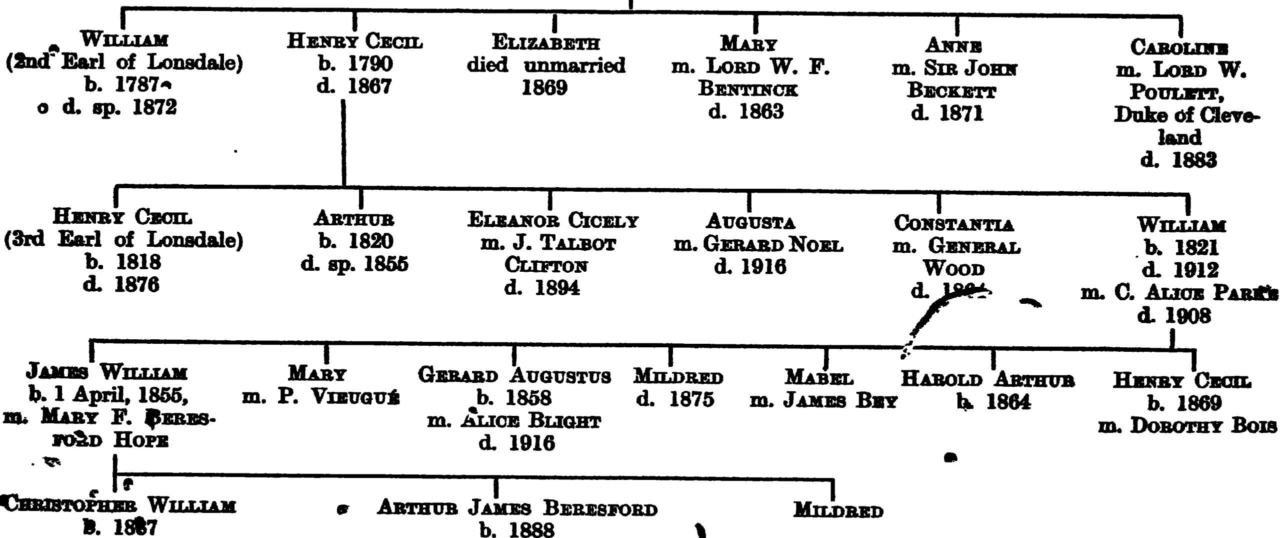
Another subject which often led to futile and unnecessary debates and numerous divisions, was the question of the nightly adjournment of the House. Mr. Gladstone was always ready for work and prepared at any time of night to embark on a fresh subject, the importance of which was to him no drawback to its discussion. After about midnight this was much resented by the Opposition, and rules for establishing fixed hours for adjournment, both of opposed and of unopposed business, were introduced, and now form a part of the regular machinery of procedure.

I have often been asked what is the worst "scene" that I have ever witnessed in the House. Although there were a number of "scenes" during my Speakership, and although I was compelled occasionally to request members to discontinue their speeches or to suspend them from the service of the House, and even to suspend the sitting altogether, as I have described in the account of my stewardship, the worst scenes were those that I witnessed in the years before I had the responsibility of the Chair upon my shoulders. The personal encounters and violence which took place in committee on the Home Rule Bill in 1893; the deportation of a certain number of Irish members by uniformed police in 1901; and the decision of the Opposition in 1905 to shout down Mr. Alfred Lyttelton, are, to my mind, the most painful and regrettable events of which I was a witness. I have already dealt in detail with these incidents and need not further refer to them, except to say that, regrettable as they were in themselves, they seemed to me all the more deplorable from the possibility of their becoming undesirable precedents.

Upon the maintenance of order and decorum in any assembly the free expression of opinions depends. In a democratic assembly, where every kind of view is represented, it is essential that the most extreme views, whether revolutionary or reactionary, heretical or orthodox, novel or commonplace, popular or unpopular, should be given an opportunity of making themselves heard. To allow clamour and disturbance to drown free expression of sentiment is to nullify the whole purpose of a deliberative assembly. Whatever the sentiments of the majority may be, the right of a minority, however small, to state its case and put forward its arguments, is undeniable. The House of Commons is not a public meeting, a conference or a convention, where opposition can be stifled by disturbance or silenced by shouting. History records many instances of the failure of representative assemblies to listen to the voice of reason and to be overborne by concerted and prearranged, or even spontaneous, noise and violence. This is a danger from which our great assembly is not wholly free, and it must be carefully guarded against as time goes on. Upon the Speaker of the House of Commons this most important duty is specifically placed, and in his hands to that extent rests the future destiny and usefulness of the oldest and greatest deliberative assembly of the world.

APPENDIX

GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF FATHER'S FAMILY



GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF MOTHER'S FAMILY

James Parke (Lord Wensleydale) b. 1782, d. 1868 m. 1817 Cecilia Arabella Frances Barlow d. 1879

Children:

- Cecilia Anne d. 1845 m. Sir Matthew White Ridley d. 1877
  - Matthew White (1st Viscount Ridley) d. 1904
    - Matthew White (2nd Viscount Ridley) d. 1916
      - Matthew White (3rd Viscount Ridley)
- Mary d. 1843 m. Charles W. G. Howard d. 1879
  - George James Howard (9th Earl of Carlisle) d. 1911
    - Charles James (10th Earl of Carlisle) d. 1912
      - George Josslyn L'Estrange (11th Earl of Carlisle)
- Charlotte Alice d. 1908 m. William Lowther d. 1912
  - James William Lowther b. 1855

INDEX

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London, W.1.

Messrs. Edward Arnold & Co.'s AUTUMN ANNOUNCEMENTS, 1925

A SPEAKER'S COMMENTARIES.

By the RIGHT HON. VISCOUNT ULLSWATER, G.C.B.

Two Volumes. Demy 8vo. With Illustrations. **36s. net.**

There have been a hundred and thirty Speakers of the House of Commons during the last 550 years, the latest to complete a term of office being the Right Hon. James William Lowther who filled the Speaker's Chair from 1905 to 1921, and was raised to the Peerage on his retirement. Lord Ullswater can look back upon a long period of Parliamentary life: he first entered the House in 1883, and from 1895 he acted as Chairman of Committee and Deputy Speaker. It fell to him to preside over the debates on many momentous occasions; he was Speaker during the whole of the Great War, and during the long series of events which culminated in the disruption of the United Kingdom through the creation of the Irish Free State. He witnessed great changes in the procedure of the "Mother of Parliaments," which were often due to his suggestions, and influenced the constitutional history of Parliamentary institutions all over the world. He had much to do with the shaping of the famous Parliament Act which has made the House of Commons supreme as a legislative body. He had to deal with the difficult situations caused by the fanatical section of the Suffra-

gettes, by the loquacity of Irishmen, by the uncontrolled utterances of "advanced wings" of all parties. A host of emergencies of one kind or another constantly presented themselves which required handling with great sagacity and tact.

Lord Ullswater's reminiscences form a running commentary on the history of the last fifty years unique in character because of the great office he filled so well; but he was far from being merely a House of Commons man. In his younger days he was prominent as an amateur actor, notably in the A.D.C. at Cambridge and in the "Old Stagers" at the famous Canterbury week. He has always been a keen sportsman and the bags he records would be hard to beat. He has travelled far and wide, and there were not many foreign notabilities who did not cross his path. In his own country every great house was glad to open its doors to him, and few men possessed the friendship of so many distinguished and interesting people. Many amusing anecdotes are scattered through the book, which ought to prove one of the most successful works of 1925.

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The books which have been written on the history of land since the Union of 1800 would fill a very large lil but quite a small shelf would hold those of them which even a pretence of telling the story or any part of it with det ment, and with any desire to do justice to all parties concei This was perhaps inevitable, seeing that a controversy, involv many subordinate controversies, has been raging uninterrupted during the whole of the period covered. It is only yesterday, as i were, that a condition of things was reached which seemed to indicate that the main problem had—one perhaps cannot say been settled, but had at least solved itself, in such a fashion as to hold out hopes of some measure of finality. At this juncture then the present attempt to tell the whole story up to date may be regarded as timely, though still beset by exceptional difficulties.

The author is a Catholic from the South of Ireland. He has had a distinguished career at the Bar and on the Bench, and it is the simple truth to say of him that he has been the partisan of none of the many political parties whose prolonged strife has afflicted his country. In the first half of his book he writes as a historian, and records the achievements, the misdeeds and the extravagances of all of them in a spirit of critical and truly judicial detachment. He

has ingeniously and effectively employed the method of citing in favour of his views on the highly controversial matters with which his pages abound, the evidence of witnesses who are, generally speaking, partisans of the opposite views, and has in this way elicited a coherent story which is to an unprejudiced outsider surprisingly convincing. When he reaches the period within his own personal knowledge, he writes in a different vein. He is still outside the conflict, and preserves, wonderfully, his impartiality of outlook, but he has now become an actual and deeply interested spectator of the extraordinary drama offered by Ireland during the last forty or fifty years, and his narrative is enlivened and enriched by his extensive first-hand knowledge of the personality of the principal actors in it, as well as by his profound and sympathetic insight into the character of his fellow-countrymen.

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All the leading members of the expedition are contributing to this deeply interesting work under the general supervision of Sir Francis

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